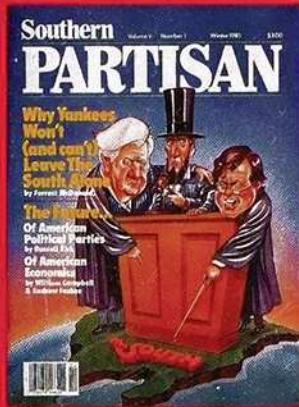
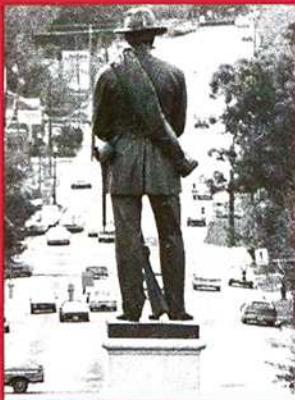
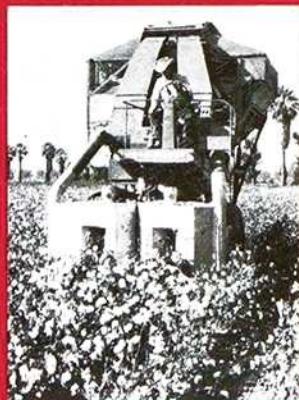
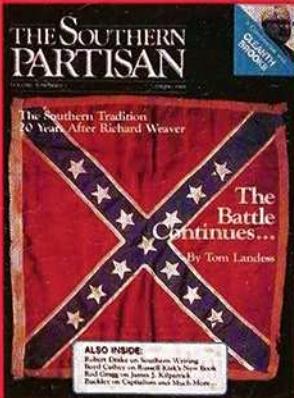
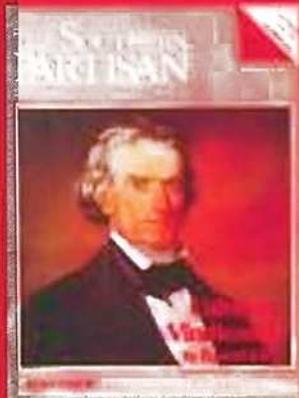
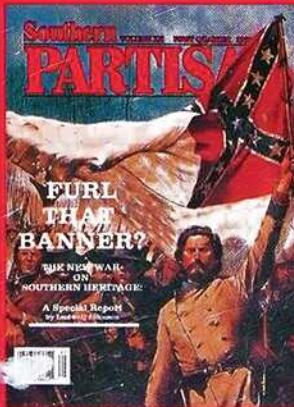


# So Good A Cause: A Decade of *Southern Partisan*



Edited by  
Oran P. Smith  
Introduction by  
Richard M. Quinn  
Foreword by  
Charles S. Hamel



# So Good A Cause:

## A Decade of *Southern Partisan*

Edited by Richard M. Quinn and Oran P. Smith and published by Charles S. Hamel, *Southern Partisan* is a magazine dedicated to defining and defending traditional Southern values. This volume is a collector's edition that includes much of the best work offered during the years of the existence of the magazine.

Published quarterly, each issue of *Southern Partisan* is an eclectic mixture of politics, history, literature, religion and culture from a Southern perspective. With subscribers in all the American states and most European countries, the magazine is a major intellectual outlet for Southern conservatism.

Regular features include a "Partisan Conversation," or interview, with a notable person; "Obiter Dicta," a collection of stinging editorial comments; "Civil War Trivia" by Webb Garrison; "Anguished English" by Richard Lederer; "Southern Sampler" by Bill Freehoff; and its most famous staple, the "Scalawag Award," which is given each issue to a Southerner who the editors believe has conspicuously betrayed the heritage or the values of the South. President Bill Clinton, Tom Wicker, Bill Moyers, Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., and David Gergen are examples of notable recipients of the infamous Scalawag Award.

Much of the writing in the magazine draws inspiration from the twelve Southern "fugitive agrarians" who produced the famous defense of the South, *I'll Take My Stand*, in 1930. Typical articles have included "The Dark Side of Abraham Lincoln," "Twenty Years After Richard Weaver: The Battle Continues," "The Second Burning of Atlanta," "Black Fighters for the South," "Did the Founding Fathers Talk Like Yankees?" "James Thornwell and Southern Religion," "The Last Confederate Widow," "Is the South A Nation?," and "The Yankeeification of Conservative Thought."

*(continued on back flap)*



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for  
American Education

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*for Mel Bradford*

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## INTRODUCTION

Early on the morning of Wednesday, March 3, 1993, the telephone rang. It was our Publisher. As one must do with news that cannot be modulated, he went straight to the point: "Mel Bradford died this morning."

Through the window, the day was forming in heavy clouds, an unusually cold day in Carolina, wet and overcast and now, suddenly, very dark. Without either of us articulating it, I knew that Charles Hamel, on the other end of the line, felt the same ache I was feeling, the one always connected to a sense of irreducible loss.

When I arrived at the office, Oran Smith, our Managing Editor, was already on the telephone, tracking down a recent photograph of Mel, from a Texas journal, to be used on the *Partisan*'s next cover. Oran's face was tight. He looked at me with awful eyes and shook his head slowly.

Later in the day, when the three of us met to discuss the enormity of the loss to our readers and to the cause of Southern traditionalism, we agreed that Tom Landess, our Associate Editor and Mel's closest friend, should write the obituary. Tom, who has been living "temporarily" in Washington, D.C. for the past ten years, knew him best.

Mel and Tom had taught together at the University of Dallas for sixteen years. They had fought, side by side, the same enemies. They were as brothers.

Tom, contacted by telephone, agreed to write our lead piece about his friend. As it turned out, he had spoken with Mel only a few hours before the scheduled heart surgery. Mel, he said, was at peace, unafraid, although both men had a strong sense that they were saying good-bye.

The telephone rang at the *Partisan* office all day, from all over the country, as friends and contributors called to express disbelief and sadness. The news was spreading—not by CNN or by what Rush Limbaugh calls the "mainstream" media—but across the vast network of Mel's friends, colleagues, admirers, former students.

With few exceptions, the news media paid little attention, not even on those pages where coverage is normally given to the passing of important scholars. It is no small measure of the madness of our time that Rodney King is a celebrity yet so little notice is given to the death of a great man.

I am, of course, risking the charge of self-indulgence by beginning this introduction describing the reactions of our editors to the death of M.E. Bradford. So be it.

To begin with, anniversary anthologies are necessarily self-indulgent enterprises. Once every ten years surely we are entitled to the unabashed contemplation of ourselves, of the handful of people who have labored to produce the *Southern Partisan* for so long, if not punctually, at least well, and with enthusiasm. But, most of all, Mel Bradford is the logical focus of this introduction because of the way he surrounded this magazine with his prodigious intellect, his special gifts and his inspirational spirit.

In the early days, when we were scrambling to find good writers to fill blank pages, Mel not only wrote for us. He called his friends and made them our friends. When feuds that now seem trivial were brooding, Mel saw value in everyone and quietly appealed to the best in us all.

Then there was the matter of critical judgment. When a controversial manuscript came to hand or when we needed to decide how to treat a sensitive issue editorially or when any other major decision was in the making my first suggestion to Charles and to Oran was always the same: "Call Mel and see what he thinks." Now we can do that only in our prayers. But I suspect that his inspiration will always be with us, just as it has been almost from the beginning.

What, then, were the circumstances of the beginning? What of general interest is there to say about the past ten years as overview for this anthology?

The idea for a Southern conservative magazine was hatched in a conversation among the trustees of a small non-profit foundation called the Foundation for American Education (FAE). Charles Hamel was the president and founder of FAE. Father Vernon Schrader, Richard Hines and I, among others who have served over the years, were trustees.

At one point, in the 1970s, the Foundation had toyed with the idea of creating a small junior college, to provide as many young people as possible with the rarest of all gifts in our time: a well-rounded education based on the classical approach to learning. Unfortunately, the idea of a college, once the numbers were carefully evaluated, be-

came simply unaffordable.

However, in the spring of 1977, at Spartanburg, South Carolina, the Foundation did hold a major seminar entitled "The Search for Order in American Society: The Southern Response." Among the principal speakers at the seminar were Andrew Lytle, one of the last remaining of the twelve Vanderbilt Agrarians who produced the 1930 classic symposium *I'll Take My Stand*, and a larger than life Texan named M.E. Bradford, who had co-edited with George Core a book of Weaver's writings called *The Southern Tradition at Bay*.

Inspired by the seminar, the trustees of the Foundation began discussing other ways we could advance the insights of the Agrarians and Weaver and attempt to apply them to our own time. How, we wondered, could we issue a new clarion call? Yankee conservatism, whose principal ingredients were pro-capitalism and anti-communism, had voices elsewhere. But there was no popular voice for the qualities and the values embodied in Southern history: the importance of family life, small communities, local government, honor and manners; the sacred value of the land; the need to nurture the religious roots of the Republic and to keep the old stories alive as a basis for renewal.

First we published the proceedings of the seminar. We also brought into print some previously unpublished essays by Richard Weaver on the importance of name, roots and family and on the disintegration of the social fabric in America (these long before it became fashionable to worry about the decline of "family values" and long before riots in Los Angeles, Detroit and Miami and elsewhere demonstrated the utter moral depravity of American innercities).

Finally, one of our trustees, Richard Hines, suggested that we launch a Southern magazine. I had a background in journalism. This would be, he suggested, a more "do-able" project for the Foundation than a college. He was aware of two college professors, Clyde Wilson and Thomas Fleming, who had made such an effort. In 1979 they had published two issues called *The Southern Partisan Quarterly Review*. Perhaps they had a mailing list.

The idea was exciting. We arranged a meeting with Drs. Wilson and Fleming. The Foundation purchased, for a very modest price, a list of some 300 names and resumed publication under the shorter title, the *Southern Partisan*, in the summer of 1981, initially with the collaboration of Wilson and Fleming, who later departed but who continue to do distinguished work elsewhere, Professor Wilson as editor of the John C. Calhoun Papers at the University of South Carolina and Dr. Fleming as editor of *Chronicles* magazine.

Having announced by mail the return of the *Partisan* to the initial list of subscribers (asking them to renew), we began publication with a total of exactly 19 readers. In the early years, with no staff whatsoever, my wife, Ruthie, as always, shielded me from the humiliation of over-commitment in countless ways. She served as assistant editor, grammarian, head of the reader complaint department and circulation manager, adding name after name to our growing *Partisan* family. Soon we had readers in every state and most European countries. At this writing, in late 1993, we publish in excess of 12,000 issues and have set, as a realistic goal, the addition of 15,000 new subscribers by the end of next year.

This anthology, collecting, as it does, some of the most memorable articles, essays, reviews and interviews published over the past decade, is, therefore, both a retrospective and a prospective publication. Retrospective because there are significant writings in this volume which will now be in hard cover, offering to posterity important insights by Andrew Lytle, Russell Kirk, Tom Landess, Ludwell Johnson and many others, including the last writings of Holmes Alexander and M.E. Bradford.

But this volume also celebrates what is yet to come, because the need for the *Southern Partisan* is even greater now than it was a decade ago when we began this publication with our 19 readers. And we are, at this moment, better armed than ever to continue the defense of Southern tradition.

For this, we owe a debt of gratitude to many people: first, of course, to the subscribers who have remained faithful and forgiving through financial emergencies and long delays between publication; then to the writers and artists who have contributed their talents so generously either pro bono or for fees so skimpy that it's a miracle some labor union hasn't called for a vote to set up shop.

I leave it to our Publisher to give specific thanks to other significant players in the Foreword. But I must mention here three major colleagues who truly make the *Southern Partisan* possible.

First among equals is Charles Hamel, who makes too many contributions to enumerate, not the least of which is his vision for the magazine and for the cause. I have never known a more completely devoted publisher or a more loyal friend. Next is Oran Smith, whose association with the magazine over the past several years has caused a tremendous leap forward in both the physical and the intellectual quality of this journal. Indeed, Oran's talent as editor and taskmaster is evident on every page of this anthology. The third colleague is Tom Landess, one of the best writers in America today, who is re-

sponsible, either in whole or in part, for most of the best things we have done.

These statements of gratitude bring to mind again the image of M.E. Bradford, who defined for us in one place and for all time what the *Southern Partisan* and all Southerners (regardless of where they come from) should seek to do. Writing the conclusion in a 1980 anthology entitled *Why the South Will Survive*, Mel Bradford suggested that Southerners have a unique obligation to preserve the heritage:

For the sake of memory let us preserve the iconic things-buildings, monuments, gardens, rites, celebrations, and stories—which have defined us for over three hundred years as a people apart, and which carry in themselves the seeds of restoration as a context for the tradition. Objections to these reminders of an earlier South or to an attention to its history must be resisted, at every turn and with every resource. Those who would destroy the icons and erase that memory are not Southerners as we define the species here, but instead serve chiefly to recall to us why we have never agreed to be “absorbed” by the deracinated abstractions of the Union at large. The Romans taught their sons to look backward in order to prepare for the morrow. Roman literature kept alive the rumor of the Republic and the authority of its example for centuries after the elevation of Augustus.... With these priorities observed, our descendants may know that “we have not loosely, through silence, permitted things to pass away as in a dream.”

It is well to remember that the cause for which we fight is never lost so long as we offer resistance. Let us then, in Bradford's words, “cultivate the arts of memory,” which is ultimately the mission of the *Southern Partisan*. Let us also be fortified by the knowledge our ancestors took with them into battle. For they knew, and we must teach our children, that our enemies have no ultimate power because God alone is the final judge.

Richard M. Quinn

*Columbia, South Carolina*

## FOREWORD

*Southern Partisan* is somewhat different from other conservative magazines in that its ethos stems from a region of the country which has tasted the bitter fruits of military defeat and has been subjected to repeated and continuous attempts to force it to change its way of life. The very existence of *Southern Partisan* is testimony to the fact that these attempts have not wholly succeeded, much to the chagrin of the ideologues and robber barons who nevertheless continue to make war on this region in the name of the modern shibboleths of "equality" and "progress." Thus while other American conservative journals of opinion may concentrate chiefly on economic concerns (which are undeniably important) and generally take their cue from the Northeast, *Southern Partisan* readers know that there is much more to our life as a nation and life in general than the latest report from the New York Stock Exchange or the most recent nostrums revealed on the pages of *The Washington Post*.

In the three hundred-plus pages of this anthology, readers will discover that the people of the South (along with "Confederates" in other regions who have sustained the pioneer spirit) do not march in step with the rest of the country. They will also read the historical record of how the South has dealt with "armed doctrine," produced world-class leaders, and trusted in orthodox Christianity to bring it through its fiery ordeals.

But there is much more to the Southern experience and heritage than military campaigns. There is the South's instinctive mistrust of large centralized government, its devotion to the land and to community, and its sense of place and time. These themes are present on every page as well.

With many hundreds of fine articles and pieces published during the first ten years of the *Southern Partisan*'s existence, it was no easy matter to select those writings which we believed represent the very best contributions which the magazine has published during its relatively short lifetime. But it is our hope that the writings gathered together in this anthology will inspire a new generation of Southern-

ers to rediscover its rich heritage, and that the Southern experience will serve as an inspiration to all Americans and others worldwide who desperately seek a restoration of order, sanity, and community.

We would be remiss if we did not note that without the invaluable assistance of many devoted friends, a project of this nature could never have come to fruition. I wish especially to thank Dr. Russell Kirk, the "Sage of Mecosta," who from the beginning has sustained and fortified us; and the Marguerite Eyer Wilbur Foundation, whose generosity in the past helped keep the presses running and whose generous response in the present instance made this anthology possible. Special thanks are also due here to Mr. Gary Ricks, the Chief Executive Officer of the Wilbur Foundation, who has always taken a very personal interest in the works of the Foundation for American Education and *Southern Partisan*. We are also most grateful to the J. Evetts Haley Charitable Trust and the North Carolina Dairy Commission, which have in the past rendered valuable assistance to us at critical junctures.

Sustained by all of these sources, and most especially by our readers, *Southern Partisan* will continue making the case. For in the words of Alexander Stephens, "the cause of the South is the cause of us all."

Charles Scott Hamel

Chapin, South Carolina

# **PART ONE**

## **ANTEBELLUM MATTERS**

**James Henley Thornwell and Southern Religion**  
*Eugene D. Genovese*

**1987**

The God-fearing, Bible-reading, hymn-singing Confederate army grew out of a Southern soil well cultivated during the long struggle of countless, if largely unsung, preachers to civilize a harsh and violent frontier. Personal piety and Bible-centered family circles bolstered the churches in a successful effort to shape the regional culture. The churches assumed responsibility for the education, especially moral, of the people, high and low and to a degree rarely appreciated, they set the terms for a vast consensus on the proper foundations of the social order. Let there be no mistake: a firm commitment to slavery lay at the heart of that consensus, but few dared to enter public discussion of slavery's character and consequences without being prepared to ground their views in Scripture. For unlike the North, the South resisted the rising pressure to slight the Word and reduce the Spirit to philosophical speculation. In helping to forge that conservative sensibility, the most humble preachers stood with the most sophisticated theologians. For, much like the leading secular intellectuals (most of whom also took religious ground) they did not suffer that acute alienation from their society which was becoming the hallmark of the intellectuals of the North and, indeed, of the whole of trans-Atlantic bourgeois society.

The Southern intellectuals, lay and clerical, have for the most part been swept into that famous Dustbin of History, to which those who back losing causes are routinely consigned. With a few honorable exceptions, our historians assure us that the Old South had no intellectual life worthy of the name and scarcely any intellectuals who remain worth reading today. It would take little effort to expose these assertions as rubbish, but let me settle for the observation that the Southern theologians easily held their own with the Northern, and that, in James Henley Thornwell of South Carolina (1812-1862), the South had a brain second to none.

The son of a particularly successful upcountry overseer and a devout Calvinistic Baptist mother, Thornwell had opportunities uncommon for his class. Bright and disciplined, he seized them. His widowed mother found patrons to sponsor his education, and he received some private tutoring to supplement time in an old field school and an academy. He was graduated from South Carolina College with highest distinction and within a few years returned there to teach. Thornwell's entry into the ministry surprised his college mates for he had not been especially pious as a student and had

been expected to plunge into a political career.

Thornwell rose to become one of the foremost leaders of a state that burst with outstanding men. Calhoun considered him a giant among men, notwithstanding political differences over nullification and much else. He served with distinction as President of South Carolina College, the finest institution of higher learning in the South and one of the finest in the nation. He edited the prestigious *Southern Presbyterian Review* and served as pastor of the socially and politically powerful Presbyterian congregation in Columbia. A staunch advocate of *jure divine*, he was widely recognized as a premier ecclesiologist, even by his adversaries. His impact on eminent and influential Southern divines—Palmer, Adger, Smyth, among others—could hardly be exaggerated. And withal, he emerged, by common consent, as the greatest theologian in the South, arguably in the nation. Among other accomplishments, his contributions to the theory and practice of education could be read with profit today for the light they shed on current concerns.

With regret I must here pass lightly over his theology, for his sermons and essays on the Trinity, the personality of God, and other subjects have much to teach about the human condition and its prospects. Our immediate concern is with his social and political thought, and much of his best efforts in defense of orthodox Calvinism remain beside the point. For while it is true, and of capital importance, that he grounded his world view in theology, the relevant portions of his work pertain less to Calvinist specifics than to those doctrines he shared even with the Arminian Methodists. Had it not been so, not merely for Thornwell but for the Southern divines as a whole, the Old South's discernibly conservative view of social order and its Christian defense of slavery could never have achieved consensus. To put it another way, a particular doctrine of the Fall, original sin, and the Atonement undergirded his social theory, but it did so at the most general level to which all Christians might subscribe. The Methodist Bishop George Foster Pierce, the Baptist Rev. Thornton Stringfellow, and the New School Presbyterian Rev. Frederick A. Ross, among many others, disagreed among themselves on the ways of salvation but agreed on a defense of slavery that derived from their common Christian principles.

Thornwell identified as the foundation of all Christian thought the personality of God and His readiness to condescend to commune with His creatures. He insisted that the Word alone could not save us, for it constituted the means, not the source, of life. "The Spirit and the Bible, this is the great principle of Protestant Christianity."

But for Thornwell, unlike the liberal theologians and heterodox Calvinists who were sweeping the North and increasingly espousing Abolitionism, the Spirit could not be invoked as an excuse to slight the Word. For without the supremacy of the Word in the popular mind, "the most enormous crimes" would be committed in the name of religion. Hence, we cannot expect to know the Word unless infused by the Spirit, for "faith is an intuition awakened by the Holy Ghost." With that intuition, "the Bible becomes no longer a dead letter, but a spirit, and religion is not a tradition, but a life." In consequence, the "true principle, the only infallible source and measure of religious truth is the Word of God...the Sacred Scriptures."

From these few, firm, general Christian principles Thornwell derived his view of the Church and of human affairs. But as with his view of the natural world, he left ample space for the sciences, natural and social, and made signal contributions to the campaign, spearheaded by the Old Presbyterians, to establish true science as being in harmony with Scripture. The attempted reconciliation, promoted through advocacy of the Baconian inductive method, ultimately ended in a disaster for the churches, but in the South it fared well before the War. We must pass over it here, but should note that Thornwell's scripturally grounded socio-political views took full account of the generally accepted political economy and sociology of his day and were by no means lazy extrapolations from selected sacred texts.

Thornwell's contemporaries, intending a compliment, often referred to him as "the Calhoun of the Church," and historians, not all of whom have intended a compliment, have followed suit. No doubt he was, but we might pause to reflect that no one has ever called Calhoun "the Thornwell of the state." As a no quarter defender of *jure divino* and as the foremost exponent of the republican nature of scripturally sanctioned church polity, Thornwell did in fact parallel Calhoun's efforts in political theory, as both of them appreciated. Yet there is a danger in the compliment, which his Christian contemporaries should have seen in the first instance, and which critical historians have seen all too well. For it suggests that Thornwell's orthodox theology represented a grand apologetic for the political ideology inherent in his views of church and state, considered separately and in interrelation. To the contrary, his views of church polity and of social order, including his subtle defense of slavery, derived from his theology, for he was concerned, first and foremost, with God and salvation. With undoubted sincerity he declared that if the Southern people could be convinced of the sinfulness of slavery, they

would waste no time in putting it on the road to extinction.

Here and elsewhere Thornwell put his finger on an essential feature of the unfolding tragedy of the Old South: The God-fearing Southern people turned to the Bible to justify slavery as God-ordained, and the Bible did not disappoint them. Their theologians rent the Abolitionists, at least on the essentials, in their war of Biblical exegesis. Increasingly, the Abolitionists had to retreat to arguments from the Spirit rather than the Word—a procedure that served them well among the many Northerners for whom the Word was becoming something of a nuisance, but a procedure that ruined them among the country people of the South, who resisted all theological liberalism, however nicely packaged as neo-Calvinism.

Thornwell's sermons and essays on slavery passed into an extraordinary critique of the condition of the modern world and represent a peak moment in the development of Southern thought, but they contain deeply disquieting implications for Southern conservatives and for all others who seek an accurate understanding of a conflicted—or, if you prefer, a sinful—world.

Thornwell had a taste for polemics and a reputation for swinging hard. Normally, he restrained himself in a manner appropriate to a Southern gentleman, but he had bad moments, as in his denunciation of Charles Hodge. Poor Hodge. There he was, the joy of the Old School Presbyterians in the North, much as Thornwell was in the South; Thornwell's powerful ally against the New School and against all opponents of orthodoxy; an outspoken defender of Southern rights and of the Scriptural justification for slavery. Yet when he took a conciliatory position on questions of church polity, Thornwell went for his jugular. "Hodge's argument is utterly rotten." And that was for openers.

Thornwell was not a man to take lightly questions that others might treat as mere matters of tactic or administration. The struggle concerned the church boards and the rights and powers of the ruling elders. Beneath the specifics lay the question of power and authority—of the relation of the elders to the laity and of the Church to the world. Thornwell took high church ground. Hodge, an ultra-conservative in the North, looked like a liberal temporizer in South Carolina. His concessions to the laity had two defects: They broke with Scripture and, however inadvertently, they opened a wedge to the democratic radicalism that was threatening to inundate church and state. The struggle for order in the Church thus combined an intransigent view of Scriptural authority with a deep commitment to social stratification. For Thornwell, the power of the Church "is solely ministeri-

al and declarative....Whatever is not commanded [in the Bible], expressly or implicitly, is unlawful." Conversely, he condemned the notion that whatever is not forbidden is allowable. The silence of Scripture amounts to a prohibition.

The analogy to Calhoun's constitutional theory could hardly be missed, but Thornwell left nothing to chance. "The Church, like the Government of the United States, is a positive institution, with positive grants of power, and whatever is not given, is *withheld*." The Scripturally sanctioned rulers of the Church "stand in the same relation to the Church that the rulers of the United States sustain to the people...The ideal of the freest, noblest government under heaven, which Milton so rapturously sketched, corresponds, without an exception, to our Presbyterian, representative republic."

Moving from Church to state—significantly, in a sermon on "The Christian Doctrine of Slavery"—he denounced the political radicalism of the age and upheld "representative, republican government against the despotism of the masses on the one hand, and the supremacy of a single will on the other." In this sermon, as in others, Thornwell assailed the Abolitionists for waging wars not merely on slavery as a peculiar form of property, not merely on Southern rights as the bastion of the Constitution, but on the very principle of social order. Implicitly, sometimes explicitly, the Abolitionists were attacking all class distinctions and legitimate authority. Indeed, they were attacking Christianity itself since the Bible commanded social stratification and subordination in the wake of the Fall. Thornwell charged that the Abolitionist argument "fully and legitimately carried out, would condemn every arrangement of society, which did not secure to its members an absolute equality of position; it is the very spirit of socialism and communism." And in one of his fiercest polemical outbursts, he added, "The parties in this conflict are not merely Abolitionists and Slaveholders; they are Atheists, Socialists, Communists, Red Republicans, Jacobins on the one side, and the friends of order and regulated freedom on the other. In one word, the world is the battle ground, Christianity and Atheism the combatants, and the progress of humanity the stake."

Thornwell and his fellow Southern divines argued—and, I regret to say, demonstrated—that the Old Testament established slavery as ordained of God, and that Jesus, who spoke not one word against it and did not exclude slaveholders from the Church, reaffirmed the sanction. But many of the divines, with Thornwell at their head, went further and subsumed slavery under the general principle of social subordination. Thus they repeatedly and forcefully associated

the subordination of slaves to masters with the prior subordination of women to men. Thornwell denounced all equality other than spiritual as contrary to God's law and, in effect, made slavery a special case in the general subordination of the laboring classes to the propertied. Note it well: He did not take racial ground, except to the extent that he regarded blacks as inferiors who were peculiarly destined as a race to be among the hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Had Thornwell simply peddled the myth of Ham, according to which blacks lay under a special curse, as many lesser minds and weaker scholars did, his defense of slavery and his social thought in general would be of little interest and would—or should—constitute an embarrassment to his admirers. But, like many other able Southern divines albeit with greater learning, clarity, and depth, he recognized that the Bible sanctioned slavery in general—"in the abstract," as his contemporaries put it—not black slavery in particular. For God had ordained slavery among the ancient Israelites without regard to race, as "race" came to be understood. Thornwell knew, and modern scholarship confirms, that members of all races, including the Caucasian, were subject to lawful enslavement and that slavery was established as a special case of a wider social subordination. It might be noted that Thornwell, while holding blacks to be inferior, assailed the scientific racism according to which blacks were a separate species, and that he held a cautiously hopeful view of the future of the race. Pseudoscientific theories of race he denounced as unscriptural. He bravely stood against hostile demonstrations in Charleston to bring blacks into the Church and declared, "We are not ashamed to call him [the black man] our *brother!*"

For Thornwell, the essential problem remained that of a proper Christian social order. With George Fitzhugh, he considered the race question a regionally specific complication. He pointed to the deepening crisis of European society, which he observed firsthand in his travels, and expressed horror at the condition of the English poor. He concluded that Europe was already facing, and the North would soon face, all-out class war and revolutionary turmoil. Consequently, he projected slavery as the Christian solution to the Social Question. In the bluntest possible language, he predicted that the capitalist countries would have to institute a labor system so close to Southern slavery as to be indistinguishable from it.

Now, Thornwell had studied political economy and did not challenge its reigning Ricardian and Malthusian "laws." He could not, however, rest comfortably with its callous disregard of the human

misery inherent in capitalist economic development. He must surely have gagged on the analysis of George Tucker, Virginia's outstanding political economist, according to which slavery would disappear as the price of free labor fell below that of slave. For stripped of the complacent, not to say cold-blooded, celebration of economic progress, the analysis pointed toward the immiseration of the laboring classes, white and black. Thornwell acknowledged that those economic laws, if left to work themselves out in a marketplace society, would generate the result, but he had the wit to know that economic laws alone do not direct the course of man. He expected the suffering laborers to rise with revolutionary violence against so monstrous a system, and he sought a solution that would be conservative in its adherence to the principles of social order and yet humane in its insistence that the privileged classes accept responsibility for their inferiors. He found that solution in the personal subordination of the laborer to some form of slavery or industrial serfdom. That such a solution would have impeded economic progress he surely knew, but we may doubt that he lost much sleep over the prospect.

Thornwell marched at the head of a swelling army of Southern divines of all denominations, who were in tandem with the secular theorists. Indeed, twenty years earlier the great Thomas Roderick Dew, notwithstanding his utter devotion to the Manchester School and his enthusiasm for the progress of capitalism and free society, gloomily projected a worldwide proslavery reaction. Yet in one sense Thornwell was no friend to slavery at all. Like many Southern divines he ruthlessly criticized its evils and demanded such sweeping reforms as the legal sanction of slave marriages, repeal of the laws against slave literacy, and effective measures to punish cruel masters. In short, he demanded that Southern slavery be made to conform to Biblical and Christian standards. On the eve of secession he even flirted with the idea of proposing gradual emancipation.

But what did Thornwell understand by emancipation? This, after all, was the same man who, at that very moment, was recommending slavery as a solution to Europe's Social Question. He meant raising the blacks out of chattel slavery into some kind of industrial serfdom or "warranteeism," as Henry Hughes of Mississippi called it—raising the blacks, with requisite racial qualification, to the level of the white laboring classes that were on their way to the same fate. He envisioned a system that would subordinate all laborers to personal masters while it guaranteed not only cradle-to-grave security but respect for the individual and the family beyond that which the existing Southern system as yet provided.

Shortly before his death Thornwell went further. Cautiously, in a "Sermon on National Sins," preached on the eve of the War, and boldly in a remarkable paper on "Relation of the State to Christ," prepared for the Presbyterian Church as a memorial to be sent to the Confederate Congress, he called upon the South to dedicate itself to Christ. He criticized the American Founding Fathers for having forgotten God and for having opened the Republic to the will of the majority. "A foundation was thus laid for the worst of all possible forms of government—a democratic absolutism." To the extent that the state is a moral person, he insisted, "it must needs be under moral obligation, and moral obligation without reference to a superior will is a flat contradiction in terms." Thornwell demanded that the new Constitution be amended to declare the Confederacy in submission to Jesus, for "to Jesus Christ all power in heaven and earth is committed." Vague recognition of God would not do. The state must recognize the God of the Bible—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Thornwell made clear that he wanted neither an established Church nor religious tests. The state must guarantee liberty of conscience for all: "He may be Atheist, Deist, infidel, Turk, or Pagan: it is no concern of the State so long as he walks orderly." Could a Jew become Chief Magistrate? Certainly, so long as he does nothing in office "inconsistent with the Christian religion." By all means separate Church and state, but do not delude yourself that you can separate the state from religion. At issue lay the moral basis of society, which, Thornwell argued, had to be informed by one religious system and, therefore, in the Protestant South, by Christianity. (I cannot prove that T.S. Eliot read Thornwell's essay, although I suspect as much, but I would invite a comparison of "Relation of the State to Christ" with Eliot's celebrated essay "The Idea of a Christian Society.")

Thornwell's foray had a sharply critical edge. He warned, in the sternest terms his Calvinist soul could muster, that God was testing his people; that their victory would depend upon repentance; that, specifically, they must be prepared to do justice to the slaves and all others placed in their charge:

God is the ruler among the nations; and the people who refuse Him their allegiance shall be broken with a rod of iron, or dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. Our republic [the CSA] will perish like the Pagan republics of Greece and Rome, unless we baptize it into the name of Christ... We long to see, what the world has never yet beheld, a truly Christian Republic, and we humbly hope that God has reserved it for the people of these Confederate States to realize the grand and glorious idea. God has wooed us by extraordinary good-

ness; He is now tempering us by gentle chastisements. Let the issue be the penitent submission of this great people at the footstool of His Son.

Thornwell's theology and ecclesiology are not much in fashion today, but, then, fashions have a way of waning and returning. And the proslavery specifics of his social thought are, let us pray, interred with him. But it would hardly be wise to discount his larger views, which contain valuable insights into the problem of reconciling democracy with freedom as well as penetrating explorations of human psychology and its political ramifications—explorations I have only been able to hint at. Unbiased study of his work ought to enlighten anyone, from any part of the political spectrum, who reflects on his heroic attempt to envision a Christian society that could reconcile—so far as possible in a world haunted by evil—the conflicting claims of social order with social justice and both with the freedom and dignity of the individual.

I should not presume to tell Southern conservatives where to place Thornwell in their tradition, but, surely, a straight line runs from him to the Agrarians, who, astonishingly, slighted the thought of all the antebellum theologians. That straight line runs counter to any romance with the ideals and practice of the marketplace, which today entrance Neoconservatives and refurbished nineteenth-century liberals. For if Southern conservatives, in contradistinction to conservatives who are Southerners, have a tradition to appeal to—and I believe they have a great one—it is a tradition that has resisted bourgeois society, its atomistic culture and its marketplace morality.

Evaluating that tradition and Thornwell's place in it, I might be told, is your concern, not mine. But the enormities of our century and our common fate in a world of nuclear weapons and a technological capacity for unprecedented assaults on human dignity and the human spirit compel me to risk the presumption. For the questions that that great man raised, the brave if often unacceptable answers he advanced, and the insights into ourselves he offered continue to speak to all honest and sane men. ☆

**The Theology of Secession**  
*M. E. Bradford***1991**

*At the very deepest level there is a central truth about the War Between the States which is now, even by the best of Southerners, almost never mentioned, although their forefathers had once spoken of its importance continuously. Indeed, they put emphasis upon it long after the War was over. From 1850 until 1912, this explanatory assumption was a commonplace component of one understanding of the meaning of that great conflict. And to most Southerners, it seemed almost as self-evident as did the equivalent formulations to their Northern counterparts—especially in the years of Antebellum dispute over the morality of slaveholding and other distinctions of "character" separating the two original versions of American civilization. When Confederate Southerners stood ready to face death in the place where the battle was joined or when they came to write apologia for their conduct, they saw themselves as part of a struggle between "powers and principalities," alternative conceptions of the human enterprise—not merely as adjuncts to competing schemes for gathering political power. Southerners, of course, fought to defend themselves and their view of the Constitution. They fought out of a loyalty to "hearth and roof-tree," and to what had been achieved by Americans in general between 1774 and 1791. Further, they were animated by a sense of personal honor and were therefore unwilling to continue association with their detractors within the federal bond once condemned by their erstwhile countrymen to live under the insufferable burden of high-handedness and effrontery. But that is not all of the story concerning their reasons for secession—not even the most interesting part.*

Southerners had, by the time they left the Union, serious doubts about what kind of country the United States was about to become. It was not only what the Yankees were attempting to do to the South but, even more important, what they were doing to themselves which made the moral and intellectual leaders of our region doubt whether they wished to leave their children in any political or moral connection with the modern power state emerging above the Old Surveyors' Line. In the North was a regime whose primary faith was in the human will and intellect, in the ability of man through science and politics to subdue the entire Creation and reshape it according to his fondest dreams. The political form of this culture was that of a

juggernaut, embodying a radical spirit, which, according to Admiral Raphael Semmes, "seemed to be now what it had been in the Great French Revolution, a sort of mad-dog virus," making "rabid" all who were touched by it. Writing in the same vein, the Virginia theologian William H. Hall, in his *The Historic Significance of the Southern Revolution* (1864), writes of his comrades in the Confederate army, "We are permitted to vindicate the supremacy of Jehovah's word and the purity of His government." The disposition of Northern clergy to divinize human nature and to glorify human reason Hall deplored. At some length he explained how they came to embrace such heresy. Then he used the same historical evidence to draw another line from enemies of the French Revolution to the Southern counterrevolution, coming thus to conclude that "this explains why the Southern Clergy, standing aside for the time from all their previous practice, have shown such an active sympathy with this political revolution." At which point he quotes with approval the Rev. B. M. Palmer: "It is not only from the impulse of a lofty patriotism, grand as that sentiment may be, but out of loyalty to God against whose rightful supremacy a wicked infidelity has lifted its rebellious arms." This explanation of secession as holy war against the presumptions of modern thought recalls to our attention that the Confederate Constitution acknowledged the sovereignty of God over the political order. The Southern social and political philosopher Richard Weaver has described the Old South as "the last non-materialist civilization in the Western world"—a culture still immune to the ontologically aggressive spirit against which Semmes, Hall, and Palmer wrote. But the Antebellum North was a very different case.

In his Second Inaugural Address, President Abraham Lincoln raised the question of why war had occurred when Southerners "read the same Bible and pray to the same God." Since both parties "deprecated war" and were otherwise so well agreed, how was it that "the war came"? However, if we inquire closely into the regnant Northern myths of Speed and Mass, of Union and Progress, as these functioned in the cultural rhetoric of contemporary Northern commentary on what they called "The Rebellion," then we must ask whether the Great Emancipator was not in this instance (as in so much else) very much mistaken in his assumptions. For the generic Southerner, to quote once again from Professor Weaver, had a "deep, even frightening intuition of man's radical dependence." As Professor Bell Wiley observes, the Southern churches had always warned their communicants against "extreme confidence in human endeavor." The ordinary Southerner of 1860 did not approach the

world as did those who had voted for Mr. Lincoln. They were, as Anne C. Loveland observes in her *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860*, "as dubious of human ability in social and political matters as in the matter of salvation. The belief in the sovereignty of God and dependence of man was the whole of their thinking." Nor did they change their minds about these things after Appomattox. According to the classic formulation of Oswald Spengler, modern man has his prototype in the figure of Dr. Faustus, the omnicompetent master of all the sciences, the alchemist who somehow summarizes the restless spirit of Western civilization since the beginning of the Renaissance. If Spengler's explanation is correct, the Antebellum Southerner was not modern, even though his adversary was. For that Southerner could not believe that engineering, medicine, and the popular ballot could cure all the ills the flesh is heir to. And therefore he was in the way.

The epitome of the religious spirit of the Old South was in the life of the Confederate Army, in the field or in encampment. E. Merton Coulter tells us that in the winter of 1863-1864 there were religious services almost every night when one of the major Confederate forces was not directly engaged in battle. Authorities on these events are William W. Bennett's *A Narrative of the Great Revival Which Prevailed In the Southern Armies During the Late Civil War Between the States of the Federal Union* (1876), and J. William Jones' *Christ in the Camp or Religion in Lee's Army* (1887). Most of these meetings, as Henry Lee Curry III tells us in his *God's Rebels: Confederate Clergy in the Civil War* (1990), were revival services assembled by the soldiers themselves and conducted either by clergymen in the army or ministers who journeyed to the front lines in order to reinforce the resurgent belief in the Christian promises there in evidence. The immediate motive of these shepherds was their hope (and determination) that the young men under their influence would not die outside the faith. But it was not only the young who were converted while under arms. Generals Braxton Bragg, Joseph E. Johnston, William J. Hardee, Dick Ewell, and John B. Hood (to mention only a few) were converted and/or baptized while in Confederate service, along with perhaps 150,000 men in gray. Soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia formed the Army Christian Association which held prayer meetings three times a week. And a young officer in Bragg's headquarters in North Georgia wrote to his family that "thousands have professed religion and the work is still going on." One wag observed of Stonewall Jackson's command in the Valley of Virginia that it was more like a "protracted meeting" than an army

on the march. And everyone knows that there was enough theological expertise on General Jackson's staff to form the faculty of a Presbyterian seminary, that the discussion of abstruse theological questions was the General's favorite occupation—that is, next to driving the Yankees before him, "the blue-coated hosts of Beelzebub." No equivalent religious activity went on in the Union Army. For many enlisted there, the nation itself was a gathered church, and its cause a sacred creed—one of the many varieties of evidence supporting the opinion of Admiral Semmes that "no two peoples, speaking the same language and coming from the same country, could have been more dissimilar."

To quote Coulter once more, the Confederate army was extraordinary among modern forces of its size—in this with no rival but Cromwell's host—in being "free of vice." Modern armies in Europe, in Mexico, or (during the American Revolution) in the Northeast were gathering places for speculators, sutlers, harlots, gamblers, and whiskey merchants. Americans had seen all of this in their earlier wars, the ancient definition of an army as including everything and everyone moving with its train. Such conglomeration was common with Northern armies. The Confederate soldier was, of course, no angel. All of the aforementioned preaching aimed at his immortal soul presupposes that, in matters covered by those exhortations, certain improvements were in order. But Johnny Reb, if he wanted to get into any serious mischief, had to go to town.

The armies of the Confederacy were not like a modern professional force but instead resembled a patriarchal Scots clan, an extended family made up of men connected by blood and marriage, common enterprises, and a common foe. How and why they fought consorted well together. And the importance of religion among them should be seen in the context of this larger characterization of the society they represented. According to the late Clement Eaton, "In 1860 there was little disagreement between the fundamental beliefs of the lower and upper classes of the South." By this he meant that Episcopalians and "hardshell" Baptists were, in basic theology, similar. Moreover, their sense of the mortal danger threatening the very existence of their people, of the "mad fanaticism of the North," made them astonishingly sober about the business of war. But to this theory we must add another ingredient to complete our analysis of their martial piety.

A great part of the explanation for this special and collective grace comes not from Northern malice or desperate military circumstances but from the unusual relationship of the Southern clergy to

the effort made by their region to achieve its independence. As I noted earlier, almost to a man, the religious leaders of Antebellum Southern society called for secession and led the way in reconciling the people of the South to all the hardships secession would cost them: taught them that separation from the North was a "holy enterprise." And in numberless sermons and religious publications, they explained their attitudes with commentary on what was wrong with Northern religion. The Reverend James A. Duncan, Methodist clergyman and editor of the *Richmond Christian Advocate*, declared that his Northern counterparts were "advocates of every semi-infidel notion which could be stated." Northern reformers "confused politics with the Gospel of Christ." Such argument was the common fare of Southern religious journalism. The number of Southern ministers who went forth to battle with the men of their congregations, either as chaplains or as men-at-arms, was astonishingly high; and, as we learn from the slightly modified story of the Reverend John Stevens, as reported by John W. Thomason in his *Lone Star Preacher* (1941), what began for many of them as an effort to give comfort and encouragement turned, once at the front, into a more inclusive kind of leadership—most often as junior officers, as the commanders of companies and regiments. And they did not change their minds about what they had done for Southern independence, not even after military defeat. Indeed, those who had served in gray, though gentle and modest Christians, were proud of that service for the remainder of their days.

To account for the secessionist unanimity of these men, from the humblest circuit rider to Bishop Leonidas Polk and such well-known ministers as M. P. Lowrey and William Pendleton (all general officers), we must look to the special features of their vocational experience in the years before the War. Charles Roland, one of our best Southern historians, has written that "the major buttress of the Confederacy was religion." He is correct in this generalization because most Southern clergymen were, during the years of sectional conflict within their denominations, convinced that "apostasy" and "Infidelity" had become the dominant religions of the North. In national meetings and in religious publications, they had confronted the various "isms" infecting the New England mind—what Cushing Strout calls "the political religion of America." They had come to understand that Progress was a substitute religion, in lieu of religion as divine revelation and the cure of souls: a substitute which commits its victims to an endless sequence of changes for the sake of worldly change; another version of that old standby, the golden calf, in re-

cent years usually seen in disguise as the Goddess of Reason. Finally, they had listened when Theodore Parker, speaking for thousands of his kind, insisted on treating "each man as his own Christ," declaring that "true religion was independent of the Revelation of the Bible." And listened also when Ralph Waldo Emerson predicted that John Brown, once hanged, would "make the gallows as glorious as the Cross." As the War approached, these clergymen more and more tended to view the sectional controversy as a dispute between those who acknowledged the authority of the Scripture and those who set their own moral sense above it—in other words, between Christians and infidels. What signified in Northern attacks on slavery was Yankee unwillingness to be satisfied with a Biblical case, not their personal preference for a free society. Southern criticism of Northern theologians, as Eugene Genovese demonstrates in his *"Slavery Ordained of God": The Southern Slaveholders' View of Biblical History and Modern Politics* (1985), made much of this distinction as to method or approach. In exalting their own religious sense above the historic witness of the Church the abolitionists blasphemed. And if they behaved that way on one issue, using hieratic language to explore their own endlessly fresh revelation, they might well be expected to do the same in another context. This could not be suffered—or corrected by a continuous and corrosive appeal to reason. For as *De Bow's Review* observed a few months after Appomattox, "Every bloody revolution in Christendom, as well in Church as in State, for the last three hundred years, has been brought about by following the too often deceptive guide of reason." The great Southern theologians, Robert L. Dabney, James Henley Thornwell, and B. M. Palmer, as much as the ordinary Southern soldiers, saw it as an error to put final confidence in the capacity of human agency to accomplish a moral revolution. To think that way was to put one's trust in "works"—an error about which they had been warned since childhood and against which, as good Christians, they were thoroughly persuaded. As mythopoeic men, they saw both nature and history as providential: saw them in operation, as an action, not a set of propositions. In other words, underneath their politics was a firm theological foundation, one recognized by Richard Weaver but ill-understood in conventional works such as James W. Silver's influential *Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda*. This is the truth about this history that, under pressure from the resurgent theory of the War as the North's moral crusade, we have so often forgotten: misplaced to our own confusion and the comfort of those who are still our enemies, even as we argue about the past. For all of the

great issues fought out in the 1860s are with us still, sometimes disguised, but in their fundamental character never changing.

We all know of the famous Confederate war cry, the ubiquitous "rebel yell" raised in battle from Wilson's Creek and Shiloh to Valverde and Brice's Crossroads. But the sound our forefathers made while rushing upon the enemy in hot blood was not always the old Celtic war whoop of men ready to kill or be killed. Sometimes the anthem, when Federal legions stood ready to receive their assault, when death was the probable (not the possible) consequence of what they were doing, was a more solemn music. Writes the Reverend S. M. Cherry from Georgia in May of 1864:

About the fifth instant, the soldiers were called from their camps to meet the enemy in the vicinity of Oakton—they literally went from the altar to their entrenchments—from their knees to the battle with their foes—still singing the songs of Zion and supplicating the throne of grace as they surrounded the fires of the bivouac, or waited to receive the fire of the foe.

Instead of a battle cry, they raised a hymn, probably in a minor key, one of the white spirituals preserved by the shape note singers, or music close akin (see Charles F. Pitt's *Chaplains in Gray* [1957]). We have many stories of such moments—from the field at Franklin, from Sharpsburg, Bentonville and Cold Harbor; but most memorably from the first day at Shiloh where, in the last of many charges against Prentiss' brigade, several units under the command of General John Breckinridge, weary and shattered by repeated encounters with the foe, were urged by a few of their officers to break out in the then familiar hymn "We Shall March Away to Battle" and, picking up the tune, rose as a man to follow those officers toward their apotheosis in sheets of flame. In that moment, they personified the Confederate South at a level of its experience and commitment which talk of constitutional punctilio and the rights of secession do not begin to explain—at a level where it could not be defeated unless or until it willingly agreed to its own ruin and distortion. When and whether that happened is a question for our time, not for the men who sang their way to death that spring afternoon in Tennessee in the woods, where the dogwood bloomed.

In such fierce and lovely moments, a "Solid South," the "buried nation" of our ancestors, was born. For in defeat and in the bondage of enemy occupation, Southerners could think of themselves as a people called out to a special witness, a righteous nation surviving in the midst of modernity, sealed forever in its covenant by defeat and

freedom from the besetting ambitions of the victorious, progressive North. Or so the soldier-clergymen, taught by the experience of the War, encouraged them to believe. The consequences of their admonition are among us still, setting most Southerners aside from the primary delusions of our place and time. Historians who wish to understand Southern persistence in character would do well to consider this evidence, and be less concerned with explanations of Southern particularity which derive from slavery alone. ☆

**A Long Farewell:****1989****The Southern Valedictories of 1860-1861***M. E. Bradford*

As we conclude bicentennial celebration of the drafting and adoption of the Constitution of the United States, it may be hoped that we have finally arrived at the proper moment for looking back and appreciating the importance of those even more heated discussions of the document which occurred in the nation's capital during what Henry Adams called the "great secession winter" of 1860-1861. Those exchanges took place in an atmosphere dramatically colored by contemporary disputes concerning the origins, true meaning and continuing authority of that fundamental law as do the equivalent conversations of our day. For the relation between current arguments and those of one hundred twenty-eight years ago is direct and unmistakable. The connection is one which reminds this generation of the special status of the Constitution as symbol and sovereign authority over us: as the structure/process/compact to which all Americans swear allegiance in place of king or people. For Southerners the moment for this retrospection is even more propitious in that many of our countrymen are now, as never before, prepared to penetrate the curtains of their own inherited mythology, and discover in the process how prescient our Southern forefathers were in predicting what would happen once they gave up on "the Union as it was, the Constitution as it is." The paradox which I here explore—as significant now as it was when South Carolina seceded in December of 1860—is the one defined in March of that year by Senator Robert Toombs of Georgia when he asserted to his fellow senators that it would be "treason to the Constitution" to "maintain a political connection between the sections" once the predicate for that connection had been "annulled" or "overthrown." What, we must ask, are the present implications of this position vis a vis the Constitution which the South, through the official statements of its emissaries to the United States Senate, assumed in the very act of separating itself from its sister commonwealths above the Old Surveyors' Line? For, contrary to what we are taught by the most recent generation of radical historians, *secession was about the Constitution, a positive commentary or reading. And, as Southerners took pains to specify, not a rejection of it.*

We can read the major valedictory orations of the South's spokesmen in the old *Congressional Globe*: Toombs, on January 7, 1861;

then several almost forgotten addresses from D. L. Yulee and Stephen R. Mallory of Florida, C. C. Clay, Jr., and Benjamin Fitzpatrick of Alabama; then later, at the end of the series on January 21, 1861, Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi. I will return to Davis' summary performance in concluding these remarks. There were, of course, other speeches given in this series, some of them in the Senate and some elsewhere. Closely related to the Senate orations were a number of apologies for secession prepared by state secession conventions. Or given in the Southern legislatures. Or out of doors. But the January series from the United States Senate is a sufficient sample for our purposes. No more characteristic speech has survived for our examination from those times—no speech more definitive of the watershed Southerners crossed when they surrendered an identity which they believed had been stolen from them: no speech that embodied better the continuity of that crossing with their devotion to a federal conception of the fundamental law, and of the liberty of the citizen secured by it.

The farewell orations of January 1861 were, in several instances, majestic public performances—political “theater” of a high order. In most cases they were expected in advance and well attended, social events, with the Senate chamber crowded and uncomfortably close, men standing against the wall and ladies dressed to the nines seated everywhere, even (in crinoline skirts) in the aisles. Most were given from prepared texts and printed in “official” versions. They gave a lofty and deliberate formality to the process of secession, sounding a note of finality while at the same time fixing the event within the acknowledged traditions of American politics. Such usage guaranteed that appropriate attention would be given to these remarks and resulted in their being received with generosity and disinterestedness by spokesmen for moderate opinion in the North.

The speech by Senator Robert Toombs of Georgia, like its author, was more vituperative than those which followed it. Moreover, it is special in that it came before Georgia left the Union, and only foreshadowed that event. Toombs' principal point was not slavery (which he agreed might someday be abolished) but self-government, the value of courtesy between the sections, and the sanctity of those liberties for members of the existing political community which the Constitution puts beyond the reach of legislative authority acting on its own. All of which considerations have required a choice for secession. His peroration is memorable:

Restore us these rights as we have had them, as your court adjudges them to

be, just as all our people have said they are; redress those flagrant wrongs, seen of all men, and it will restore fraternity and peace, and unity to all of us. Refuse them, and what then? We shall then ask you, "let us depart in peace." Refuse that, and you present us war. We accept, and inscribing upon our banners the glorious words, "liberty and equality," we trust to the blood of the brave and the God of battles for security and tranquility.

Toombs, we remember, had been a most hesitant, conditional secessionist. With the choice for disunion coming from men of this disposition, mere talk of secession was at an end. It was concluded for specific reasons connected with the Southern understanding of the American Revolution, in behalf of the "liberty and equality" of the people of the South as a group, as opposed to any suggestion of anterior individual rights.

The farewells to Union delivered by other Southern senators coming after Toombs, men called home by the withdrawal of their states from the plural oneness invented by the Framers, are in every case reluctant performances. Not embarrassed or half-hearted, but, even so, reluctant! They suggest no gleeful separation, nor even any rancor at its necessity. Neither do they repent of the decades spent within the Union by the communities for which they speak. To the contrary, they remember those happy days gone by with affection and nostalgia compounded by their recollection of the preconditions of such cooperative, untroubled felicity. Indeed, they lament the abrogation of that fraternity.

Senator Yulee speaks of a "grateful memory" of past connection and a just Southern pride in the "continued development" of the nation left behind. To this his colleague from Florida, Stephen Mallory, added, "from the Union governed by the Constitution as our Fathers made it, there breathes not a secessionist on [Florida's] soil [and that] we leave with profound regret, those whom we will cherish in our hearts, and whose names will be hallowed by our children [as] true friends of the Constitution." C. C. Clay, Jr. of Alabama is less ingratiating. But Benjamin Fitzpatrick is quiet and pleasant in his departure. And Jefferson Davis insists that he carries with him "no hostile remembrance." Yet no one is more emphatic than Davis about secession, or the link between that momentous decision and the South's belated determination to "recur to the principles upon which our government was founded": its observation of the original American bond of unity.

Another ingredient in these elaborate farewells is less conciliatory, but part of the same rhetoric of reasonable constitutionalism.

What I refer to now is the regular iteration of Southern objections to gratuitous verbal abuse—slander which reaches outside the Constitution for its authority, appeals to a “higher law”; and to the relation of such vilification to the possibility of a constitutional morality which will preserve the Union. Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana declared that it was not so much what the Republicans and Abolitionists had done or might do as “the things they said” that made them a “pestiferous breed”—a people who hold “that the earth belongs to the Saints of the Lord,” they themselves occupying that lofty station. Toombs had made the theme of rhetorical good manners (as opposed to righteous self-aggrandizement) his own for more than a decade. Vocal “hatred of the South” could not be a ground for confederation. Moreover, his friend Alexander Stephens, soon to be Vice President of the Southern Confederacy, had long identified vituperative excess as the primary stimulant to disunion. In his view, to “put the institutions of nearly one-half of the states under the ban of public opinion and condemnation” was, as a “general principle” of political behavior, “quite enough of itself to arouse a spirit not only of general indignation but a revolt on the part of the proscribed.”

In 1861 Stephens’ analysis of the inevitable consequences of Yankee distemper seemed especially cogent to most Southerners. All the high-flown outrage at Southern modes and orders expressed between 1819 and 1860 might legitimately have come into play during the deliberations which produced and approved our national Constitution, might have insisted on emancipation as a precondition of membership in the Union. Once disapproved and thus confronted, the South in 1787 might have gone its own way. But nothing of the kind occurred at that time. Passionate condemnation without regard to the commitments of honor which were objectified in the adoption of the Constitution inspired Jefferson Davis to tell an 1857 New York audience:

You have among you politicians of a philosophic turn who preach a high morality; a system of which they are the discoverers....They say, it is true that the Constitution dictates this, the Bible indicates that; but there is a higher law than those, and they call upon you to obey that higher law of which they are the inspired givers. Men who are traitors to the compact of the fathers—men who have perjured the oaths they have themselves taken—these are the moral law-givers who proclaim a higher law.

The compromises with respect to slavery written into the political

fabric of the United States were put into their place with men from all sections standing on both sides of every disputed point. Yet sustained acrimony toward slaveholders *per se*, or condemnation of their practice, played almost no role in the Framers' discussions, either in Philadelphia or in the ratifying conventions. As a matter of fact, as the great constitutional historian Max Farrand observes, "In 1787, slavery was not the important question, it might be said it was not the moral question that it later became." To draw the South into the Union on one set of terms and then, on the basis of subsequent personal illumination, berate it for insisting on self-determination concerning its domestic institutions, even though this was the approach agreed to by that original Union, and in those original terms; to then insist on a right to interpret the bond of Union on the basis of a sectional moral superiority; and finally to invoke the "religious mysticism" of Union to prevent Southerners from acting according to human nature in withdrawing their "offensive presence" from those affronted by it—all of this dynamic in the conduct of Northern politicians seemed outrageous and intolerable to a generation of Southern leaders who could not believe in the advantage of preserving the Constitution within that kind of Union and who therefore attempted to do it the other way. As they specified in leaving Washington City.

Yulee of Florida grounds his apology for secession in Northern "indulgence of unregulated moments of moral duty." Meaning, of course, that in a healthy political atmosphere such moments should be self-regulated for the sake of the common good. Given the animosity of recent disputes between the sections and the self-assurance of Northern spokesmen, Yulee wonders if the South could agree to a federal policy concerning any aspect of its conduct not covered by the original federal covenant and stop the process there, without facing the imposition of an unending series of such reformative innovations, inspired by ideological commitment or fanatical enthusiasm, requiring an ever growing central government. Could any community in the position of the South in January of 1861 run that risk?

Clement Clay of Alabama is more expansive than his colleague from Florida. He describes as a "declaration of war" the "libel" on Southern ways gathered in the rhetoric of the Republican platforms of 1856 and 1860. For, as Clay recognized, to label an adversary as a barbarian is in some measure to release yourself from the obligation to treat him in a civilized fashion: your obligation to respect his life and property, to say nothing of his opinions. Clay sees the Northern offense against constitutionalism as being primarily linguistic, not historical or interpretive: the exertion of "all the moral and phys-

ical agencies that human ingenuity can devise or diabolical malice can employ to heap odium and infamy upon us." The implicit expectation in these attacks on the virtue (as opposed to the judgment) of the Southern people—exercises in what rhetoricians call the *diaboli*—is that the people of the South will be willing to live within the Union as "outlaws, branded with ignominy, consigned to execration and ultimate destruction." To which effrontery, in the person of its Illinois champion, Clay responds, "Sir, are we looked upon as more or less than men?"

One precondition of constitutional morality is thus rhetorical civility, as much endangered by self-appointed censors of the press, pulpit and rostrum of today as they were when the departing senator from Alabama threw down his gauntlet in defiance of their excesses. For it is still true that those censors take for wrong whatever they identify as Southern. They care nothing for legal means, only for ends—purposes that reinforce the moral presuppositions of their world. Yet in a free society the law cannot be maintained or interpreted against the will of a whole people, by compulsion and abuse: what Lee meant when he spoke disparagingly of a Union held together by nothing but bayonets. And wherever we hear the language appropriate to that strategy alone we must call it into account. I so insist because it is an idiom suited primarily to evading the restrictions of constitutional law and the narrow meaning of elections: a strategy for going against the Constitution of the United States or distorting its purpose by enlarging the scope of national authority. For if you attack your countrymen as not merely mistaken but evil you are not proceeding politically or at law. Instead you represent an authority higher than statute or process and imply an intimacy with God's plan thusward. This strategy is called rhetorically *oraculum*—speaking for the gods. It is incompatible with the stable rule of law. We must call it by its right name whenever it is brought against us. And concede nothing to its arrogance. Though in this century we must, for the sake of the common good, shout it down where it stands, and not withdraw quietly to a refuge peculiarly our own.

But more than goodwill is necessary for the maintenance of a contract between free men. Rigid observation of the terms agreed to is also required. And a clear awareness that one party to the connection cannot reserve the right to interpret it according to his views and still expect it to bind other parties offended by his construction. This is a simple proposition in logic and, I might also add, in ethics—since there has been so much talk of the morality which surrounded the decision for secession.

During the American Revolution spokesmen for the patriot cause reasoned that American obligations to the sovereign authority of King George III ended when he violated his constitutional role as protector and defender, under the British constitution, of the inherited rights of Englishmen in America. In a word, he abdicated. And with him his ministers and subjects in the mother country who agreed with Crown and Parliament to bind the colonies "in all cases whatsoever," leaving the American residue of that constitutional identity in the keeping of a group of rebels who invoked 1688, the Glorious Revolution, and the sovereignty of law. As viewed according to this calculus, constitutions may be made and amended by regular process. But they cannot evolve or stretch into elastic sanctions for calculated manipulation, subject to transformation by the exegetical legerdemain of skeptical theology or solipsistic literary criticism—the two sources of post-structuralist technique which are the most aggressive of the now fashionable methods of reshaping the law to radical purposes. Jefferson Davis, in his majestic valedictory to years of service to the United States, refers directly to these analogues. The major subject of his discourse is not verbal abuse but a misunderstanding of the relation of the Constitution to the language concerning equality which appears at the beginning of the Declaration of Independence. Davis' discussion of that language is the other important constitutional example left to us in these farewell speeches.

Davis speaks as readily as did his Senate colleague from Georgia of the continuity between what his South is doing in putting behind it a familiar and well established political identity and what the nation as a whole had done from 1774-1788. The region was now obliged (as the North American British colonies had been) to "assure a free and equal station among the peoples of the earth"; was thus compelled because its countrymen of the North misunderstood the American Revolution, the common enterprise of those earlier years. Once the federal power became not an "uncle" but merely an enemy, a government "which threaten[ed] to be destructive of [their] rights," Southerners were immediately prepared (as Davis put the matter in taking office in Montgomery a month later) to fight for "honor and right and liberty and equality." Which was to "repeat the experiment instituted by our revolutionary fathers"—to "renew such sacrifices as our fathers made to the holy cause of constitutional [i.e. corporate] liberty." The rhetoric here is of the self-determination of peoples, maintaining that one nation should be as free to govern itself according to its own chosen way as another. That such a decision was unpleasant and to be avoided if at all possible Davis concedes. Yet, as

he maintained later (in becoming the regularly elected President of the Confederacy), those who made a Southern nation out of a broken Union had no alternative and “as a necessity, not a choice [have] resorted to the remedy of separation,” by that means having “labored to preserve the Government of our Fathers.” And he spoke this way consistently once in office, continuing to emphasize the same continuity, even in his second inaugural address of February 22, 1862:

Fellow citizens, after the struggle of ages had consecrated the right of the Englishmen to constitutional representative government, our colonial ancestors were forced to vindicate that birthright by an appeal to arms. Success crowned their efforts, and they provided for their posterity a peaceful remedy against future aggression.

To show ourselves worthy of the inheritance bequeathed to us by the patriots of the Revolution, we must emulate that heroic devotion which made reverse to them but [was] the crucible in which their patriotism [was] refined.

As we all know, there is in our time, even more than when Senator Davis made his farewell, a campaign set in motion by the highest authorities, leaders in the churches, courts, media and universities, to swallow up the Constitution in a simplistic reading of the Declaration, to conflate the two documents, confuse their distinctive purposes, and employ their combination to transform the meaning of Union into something instrumental in its promotion, through the agencies of government, of a wide variety of causes which seem, for the moment, worthy: the most cunning formula for political tyranny ever devised by the mind of man. Since the time when churches all across the North rang their bells to mourn the death of that murdering fanatic, John Brown of Pottawatomie, we have been a nation threatened with any and every measure brought forward in the name of a metaphysical equality among men. With the Union preserved (though changed) by war, we have departed further than in 1860 from the frame of government intended by members of the Great Convention and leaders of the early Republic—most of this change coming down upon us in the name of the Fourteenth Amendment, as now usually misunderstood. Since Appomattox, the way has been open to malice and effrontery performed in the name of human rights—and we have been unable to close it, no matter how savage the prospect coming without hindrance, toward our threatened gates. Whenever we speak reasonably and give the lie to partisan distortion of its text, whenever we rise to protect the Constitution in its original, essentially procedural character, whenever we confront

the mad schemers of misconstruction who put in peril the liberties of all Americans, we do, for our time, as Jefferson Davis did for his, "take the hazard" against "destructive powers" and "tread the path of our Fathers,...putting our trust in God, and in our own firm hearts." ☆

**Randolph of Roanoke**  
*Russell Kirk***1986**

Some miles beyond Charlotte Court House, in Southside Virginia, one may find his way to Roanoke Plantation, which seems almost as remote as it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century. From the Revolution until 1810, scarcely a white man set foot on that plantation: black overseers and perhaps two hundred slaves grew tobacco and wheat after a fashion. Then there shifted to Roanoke Congressman John Randolph, the plantation's proprietor, disappointed in men and measures, preferring solitude. And solitude he found there in his simple cabin, among his negroes, "my only friends and companions," until he died (though in Philadelphia) in 1833. Congress has not since seen his like for eloquence and political passion.

At Roanoke Plantation there still stands today the little building that was Randolph's library and study, where the planter-statesman read everything. (The biggish white house nearby was built by Powhatan Bouldin, Randolph's biographer, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.) From his cabin-fastness on the Staunton River, the mordant witty Randolph rode north to Washington, a long arduous journey, there every year to contend in the Capitol against centralizers, innovators, and enemies of Virginia and the South.

No man did more than Randolph to shape the mind of the South, down to recent years; and no man's career in Congress was more lively and interesting than Randolph's. Yet John Randolph of Roanoke has been thoughtfully neglected in the textbooks of American history, this past half-century, or at best mentioned merely as a startling eccentric. For mass democracy and gross materialism, Randolph expressed a burning contempt. The intellectual apologists of egalitarianism and the industrial discipline therefore have resolved, "Let him be anathema!"

It was somewhat otherwise before the triumph of Franklin Roosevelt and the ideological impulses that the New Deal incorporated. For in the high-school textbook in American history that my class read in 1936, some paragraphs had to do with Randolph, as the adversary of Jefferson: that manual had been written before FDR took office. Much taken, at the age of sixteen, by Randolph's freedom from cant and pretense, I contrived to find two or three books about him, most notably Henry Adams' short memorable biography. Five years later, in graduate school at Duke University, I wrote a master's thesis about Randolph's political thought; Randolph's letters and oth-

er materials lay ready to hand at Richmond, Charlottesville, Raleigh, and the Duke collection, seldom consulted. By chance of providence, the nominal supervisor of my graduate studies was Charles Sydnor, a Virginian of the old school, a Hampden-Sydney man and a good scholar; I did not show him my thesis until it was completed and bound, but then he supported it kindly, despite the endeavors of a Rooseveltian professor of political science on my examination committee who would have denied Duke's degree to any reactionary admirer of Randolph—my first encounter with what has been called the Holy Liberal Inquisition, this.

By 1951, after years in the army, I had revised my Randolph thesis into a book, which the University of Chicago Press published under the title *Randolph of Roanoke: A Study in Conservative Thought*. This because of the approbation of a great scholarly editor, W. T. Couch (from North Carolina), who never had met me. The little volume was most cordially reviewed in both conventional and unconventional quarters, and the printing soon was sold out. In 1964, Regnery brought out a revised and much enlarged edition, under the title *John Randolph of Roanoke: A Study in American Politics, with Selected Speeches and Letters*, a handsome piece of bookmaking. In 1978, LibertyPress, Indianapolis, published a third edition, yet more enlarged, which remains in print. Perhaps some other master's thesis thus has gone through three separate editions by three separate publishers; but if so, I have not heard of any such in the discipline of political history.

Despite the critical success of my *Randolph*, there has followed no spate of Randolph scholarship. A few fairly recent books have touched incidentally, if in some detail, upon Randolph's part in practical politics—notably Norman Risjord's *The Old Republicans: Southern Conservatism in the Age of Jefferson* (1965). Various historians have been bitterly hostile to Randolph—almost as if he were a living adversary, not a dead Congressman—in their studies of other figures of the past; one of the more extreme instances of this is Irving Brant's life of James Madison.

Only one exercise in critical biography has been published in the past thirty-five years, indeed: Robert Dawidoff's *The Education of John Randolph* (1979). This book, as its title implies, draws an interesting parallel, incidentally, between Randolph and Henry Adams as Saint Michaels in American politics (Adams' half-ironical description of Randolph); I found this endeavor at psychobiography intelligent, despite its condescending treatment of Randolph's religious enthusiasm; but the book was very promptly remaindered. The only full-

scale biography of Randolph remains Senator William Cabell Bruce's two-volume *John Randolph of Roanoke* (1922). Henry Adams' *John Randolph* (originally in the American Statesmen series) and my own Randolph study being the only books about Randolph now in print, and multi-volumed anthologies such as *The Library of Southern Literature* having vanished from public libraries' shelves, even conscious and conscientious Southerners may be pardoned for knowing little more of Randolph than a few tales, vaguely recollected, about his oddities. So I set down below a summary account of what he did.

John Randolph was born three years before the Declaration of Independence, and he died during the great Nullification controversy. No man's life displays more clearly the chain of events that linked the proclamations of 1776 and of 1832. Jefferson, whose early follower Randolph was, belonged to an earlier generation of natural-rights optimists; Calhoun—who, in considerable degree, was the disciple of Randolph—belonged to the later generation that put its faith in legal logic. At both, Randolph sneered; he fought the administration of John Adams, and slashed at the administration of Jefferson, and harried every other President of his time. In Randolph's speeches, one finds at work the forces that brought on the events of 1832 and of 1861.

The heir to one of the greatest of Virginian families, John Randolph was born near the mouth of the Appomattox, on the eve of revolution. His life was turbulent from the first. Haughty, acutely sensitive, and animated by a darting passion, he was a natural champion of perilous causes. Although he was irregularly schooled at Princeton and Columbia, his delight in humane letters soon made him the most eloquent man of his time in America.

About his nineteenth year, his character was given a tragic bent by a series of mysterious events. He contracted some disease, by which he was racked for the rest of his long life. The young man was altered, outwardly and inwardly. In appearance, he long remained a kind of boy preserved in amber, youthful (though wrinkled) of face, lean and lank to the point of grotesqueness (but graceful and dignified in carriage). Suffering now and again shook his reason, so that for two or three short periods during his life he was next door to madness; yet even during those times he preserved not only his eloquence but a sardonic political realism.

All during his years of public success, this shadow and certain private disasters lay heavy upon Randolph. Yet at first, defying all handicaps, he mounted very high, as the world reckons achievement. In 1799 he debated the aged Patrick Henry; and his brilliance

of mind, expressed with his mordant tongue, carried him into the House of Representatives. At the age of twenty-six, he was a hard hater of the Federalists, a partisan of revolutionary France; he smote hip and thigh the administration of John Adams. With the inauguration of Jefferson, picturesque Jack Randolph became the majority leader of the House of Representatives; in the mediocre House of Jefferson's two terms he had no near rivals in talent within his party. Perhaps already emulating Edmund Burke, he endeavored to impeach the Federalist Justice Samuel Chase for misconduct on the bench, much as Burke had impeached Hastings; but his prosecution, like Burke's, brought no conviction. This was the first of a series of reverses of political fortune that dogged Randolph throughout his congressional career—and to which, so far as a passionate man might, he became inured with the passing of the years.

Always suspicious of executive power, and uneasy at the tendencies of the Jeffersonians, Randolph began to break with Jefferson, Madison, and other principal leaders of the Republicans in 1805. The breach had two immediate causes: the Yazoo controversy, and the attempt of Jefferson and Madison to acquire Spanish Florida.

The Yazoo lands of the state of Georgia had been acquired by speculators, through bribery of the Georgia legislature. An indignant public elected new legislators, who proceeded to repudiate the corrupt bargain. But the Yazoo land companies appealed to the federal government for compensation for their losses, pleading that the claims had passed already from the original speculators to innocent purchasers in good faith.

Madison and Gallatin, backed by President Jefferson, advocated a compromise by which the Yazoo claimants would be paid some compensation from the federal Treasury, though only a fraction of the sums they desired. Randolph set his face against any payment—with success, until he was defeated temporarily in the congressional contests of 1813. Outraged at such circumventing of the will of a sovereign state, John Randolph never forgave the other Republican leaders for their dallying with the Yazoo men.

Also in 1805, the complex affair of Jefferson's and Madison's attempt to purchase Florida, through a secret appropriation of two million dollars, became the second cause of Randolph's schism. Although he had supported the Louisiana Purchase, Randolph opposed with all his vigor the scheme to acquire Florida from the Spanish government. In effect, Randolph said, this would have been paying blackmail to Napoleon, for whom the Spanish regime was a mask. Irving Brant attributes this unyielding stand to Randolph's dislike of

Madison, and to his private frustrations.

But the reasons for Randolph's attitude lie deeper far. As a champion of personal liberty, well before 1806 Randolph had become disillusioned with the French Revolution. Napoleon he detested and feared. Only for a brief while had he been a Gallophile; his real sympathies, all his life, lay with England. And Britain, in 1806, lay in grave peril. As much as any of the Federalists whom he condemned, Randolph took English society and culture for models. The abortive Florida purchase would have strengthened Napoleon; so Randolph went into opposition, his ties with the Jeffersonians already having been much weakened.

He denounced participants in the Yazoo scandals in January, 1805; he quarreled with Jefferson and Madison over the Florida scheme during December of that year. On March 6, 1806, he spoke against Gregg's Resolution, which was designed to cut off commerce with Britain—here siding with the Federalists, although not joining their party. By August 15, his alienation from Jefferson was complete; and he formed the faction of the *Tertium Quids*, which little band of Southerners he led most of the remainder of his life.

Thus he forfeited the leadership of the House. And as the War Hawks—Calhoun, Clay, Grundy, and the rest—gained ascendancy over Congress, Randolph fought a rearguard action, foretelling ruin from war with Britain. Yet the War of 1812 came; and, unpopular for opposing it, Randolph lost his House seat in 1813. To Roanoke he retired, there meditating on Christian doctrine, lamenting the evils of the time, and losing himself in his library. As Virginia suffered from embargo and war, however, Randolph's influence with his constituency revived, so that he was elected in 1815 to the Fourteenth Congress.

Ill health, capped by an interval of madness, made him decline re-election in 1817; but, better by 1819, he resumed his Southside seat. In the House he remained until the end of 1825, when he served a little more than a year in the Senate, having been appointed to fill a vacancy. He and his friends had tried to make Monroe president in 1808; but with Monroe in power they were keenly disappointed; and they fancied John Quincy Adams worse still. In 1828, Randolph came out for Jackson's candidacy—which later he was to regret.

In both House and Senate, Randolph led an embittered group, chiefly Virginians and North Carolinians, of members devoted to state powers, the agricultural interest, economy in government, and freedom from foreign entanglements. He fought the drift toward war in 1811, the Bank of the United States in 1816, the Missouri Com-

promise in 1820, internal improvements at federal expense in 1824, increases of the tariff at all times, the Panama Mission proposal in 1826—and almost every other principal measure recommended by Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Adams. Occasionally he succeeded in blocking one scheme or another; but in most matters, as Randolph put it, he "was clean beaten down, horse, foot, and dragoons."

Throughout these years in the political wilderness, Randolph's health spiraled downward, though now and again, to the astonishment of friends and enemies, his powers would return to him as if by miracle. By 1829, when he retired from Congress, he wore the aspect of a corpse, and suffered pain almost constantly. And yet this strange man was not altogether undone.

For late in 1829, when the Virginia Constitutional Convention was convened, Randolph attended as a delegate—to denounce the entire notion of a new constitution. Confronted by this challenge, his brain reasserted its endowments of wit, logic, and fancy. At the Convention, Randolph's speeches equalled his best of thirty years earlier—perhaps, indeed, they were better. Having raised his voice in warning against neoterism, he accepted Jackson's offer of the post of minister to Russia.

St. Petersburg's cold and damp promptly brought him low. He retreated to England, which land he knew and loved well, and by the autumn of 1831 he was back at Roanoke, surrounded by his blacks—whom he would emancipate, send to Ohio, and endow with his property upon his death. Calhoun and South Carolina were approaching their collision with President Jackson. Nullification was nonsense, Randolph declared realistically; but Jackson's resort to force against South Carolina roused him to a final burst of fury, and at Charlotte Court House, in February, 1833, he poured his molten metal upon the head of Andrew Jackson.

"Dying, sir, dying," had been his reply, for decades, when men asked him how he did. Political passion alone had kept vigor in his skeleton frame; and now that fire was flickering out. He commenced a fifth trip to England; but in a Philadelphia hotel, consumption mastered him at last. "Remorse, remorse!" he cried from the bed; and then he was gone into the mystery from which he had emerged sixty years before. Love and hatred, between which that wild strong personality had been torn since childhood, now were spent.

The ardent lover of the permanent things was buried, according to his wish, in the woods of Roanoke. But in 1879 his body was exhumed and taken to Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. Penetrating his coffin, the roots of a great tree had twined through the dead

man's long black hair and had filled his skull. So, doubtless, he would have wished to lie until Judgment Day.

His had been a career of negation, if you will. Yet the eloquence remains, and the love of ordered liberty, and the tragic sense of life that so few Americans of Randolph's time apprehended. Clay and Webster are only textbook names, now; Madison and Monroe are not much more; but John Randolph, even in his torment, lives for us still. Sometimes ghostly enough when alive, he takes on a curious vitality when long dead.

Among a good many perceptive passages in Robert Dawidoff's *The Education of John Randolph* is this:

One important reason for Randolph's interest to us remains, of course, the fact that to many Southerners he came to symbolize certain values and positions—a cause. He was the precursor of subsequent southern reaction.... Randolph had this kind of sensitivity to conditions in America, and in a sense interpreted them to the next generation of southerners. His own character, his immediate personal experience, fitted him to be a vehicle or example of the cultural shift he prefigured so eloquently. What was clear to him became in time clear to the rest of the South. It may have been the abnormal workings of his mind that caused him to see what he did so early and so intensely.... What became for future generations a myth of loss was to Randolph the experience of loss. He played the part of the eccentric southerner in protest against American culture, couched directly in the terms of what upset him.... His politics of espousal, as opposed to abstract criticism, exemplified the kind of protest that responds not only to the articulation of theory but to the social facts of American society.

Aye, Randolph both foresaw what would befall Southern society, and in considerable degree molded Southern resistance to Giant Innovation. In this he was like Edmund Burke, though less successful than Burke in the long run. From Burke, indeed, Randolph obtained reinforcement of his own convictions and sanction for his resistance. On January 28, 1814, from temporary retirement at Roanoke Plantation, he wrote to Harmanus Bleeker (a New York patroon) that he was reading the fifth volume of the newly published works of Burke:

It has been an intellectual banquet of the richest viands. What a man! How like a child and an idiot I feel in comparison with him. Thank God! however, I can understand and relish his sublime truths and feel grateful for the inspired wisdom which in the true spirit of prophecy he has taught to us poor blind and erring mortals.

On April 4, 1814, Randolph asked Bleeker, "You have read Burke's first posthumous volume? What a treasure, what a mine of eloquence, sagacity and political wisdom! The rectitude of his feelings is not less conspicuous than the penetration and foresight of his understanding. He is the Newton of political philosophy. May he be their oracle."

As the might of Napoleon failed in Europe, Randolph wrote to Bleeker on June 2, 1814: "...like you I have regretted that our great master Burke could not have lived to see this day. To have heard him pour forth his ejaculations and chant his *nunc dimittis* would have shed new glory and delight upon the august scene."

On July 26 of the same year, he told Bleeker that he had been re-reading several volumes of Burke. "The Thoughts on Scarcity and the third Regicide letter shew a minute acquaintance with matters of detail that is surprising," Randolph observed. "Burke was not one of those who 'talked of *things in general*, because he knew nothing of *things in particular*.' Who but he would have hunted thro Doctors Commons to shew that there had not been in England one fifth of the number of divorces in a century, that had taken place in Paris alone, during three months?"

The Virginian who had professed himself a Jacobin and an *ami des noirs* in 1800 had become, fourteen years later, an expounder of Burke's later writings and the shaper of the South's conservatism. A decade more, and Randolph would be the preceptor of Calhoun. It was Randolph's personal "experience of loss," as Dawidoff expresses it, that had produced this profound change of conviction. The Virginia of his forefathers, the society of the Southern seaboard, was being swept away by egalitarians and economic opportunists; by the aggrandizing interests of the North and the West. What Burke had called the great civilizing forces of Europe, the spirit of religion and the spirit of the gentleman, had been terribly enfeebled in the United States, driven back by the doctrines of rationalism and utilitarianism, and by the men who stood to profit from the triumph of such notions. "The country is ruined past redemption," Randolph wrote to Dr. Brockenbrough in 1829; "it is ruined in the spirit and character of the people."

Thus it was that Randolph, in Congress or out of it, made his life a protest against the erosion of the old moral and civil order of Virginia and the United States. It was a grand protest, effectual in the sense that he taught Southerners to give to their cause the last full measure of devotion; ineffectual in the sense that by 1865 force of arms and superiority of resources would crush to earth the planter-

society for which Randolph spoke so skillfully.

"The sheer number of people and vast extent of modern America make any application of his views to the twentieth century theoretical at best," Robert Dawidoff writes of Randolph. That is true enough, if we have to do with somebody's notion that the life of the Old Dominion in the latter half of the eighteenth century might be restored or reproduced, somehow or other, in the first half of the twenty-first century. Randolph declared that any government whose sway might extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific would not be fit to govern him. We do not require professors at the Claremont Graduate School to impart such a truth to us: Heraclitus put it sufficiently well by his aphorism that we never step in the same river twice.

Yet as Dawidoff's argument runs, seemingly no public man of yesteryear would leave us any lessons of value, once the social and economic circumstances of that man's time had given way to new. (On the same premise, the preachments of the Hebrew prophets ought not to be applied to the concerns of humankind nowadays.) One deduces from Dawidoff's paragraphs that history teaches the scholar only *how* things came to pass: everything being evanescent, it is profitless to fancy that the thought and experience of a past era might supply us moderns with some torch of illumination in the dark wood of our own time.

Circumstances now and again arise in the affairs of great states, Burke remarked, when "the file affords no precedent." But we are lost altogether if we assume that all precedents and dogmata have been made worthless by the pace of social change. Would Dawidoff contend that Tocqueville's analysis of the American democracy has no abiding worth except as fragmentary explanation of how the United States came to its present pass? Presumably not. Then why suggest that nothing said by John Randolph may be relevant in some degree to our present discontents?

Therefore I reaffirm here what I wrote on this subject of Randolph's pertinence to political questions of our own era—three paragraphs written at Duke University forty-five years ago: "Randolph was not a democrat, not a nationalist, not a liberal. (He did believe ardently in equality of civil rights, in his country, and in liberty.) Unlike Webster and Clay, he did not speak grandiloquently of the tremendous future of the Union. It may be that he struggled against the stars in their courses. Surely his principles are out of fashion nowadays."

"And still Randolph's concepts of political honesty and of personal and local liberty remain valid. Randolph's speech on Gregg's Resolution (March, 1806), for instance, means more in these times of

American incertitude than ever it did before; and Randolph's despair at the transience of social institutions never was better illustrated than by the present reign of King Whirl."

"Though the course of his life was as fantastic as any romantic novel, the great merit of Randolph's political utterance is its merciless realism. For cant and slogan he reserved his most overwhelming scorn. Never equivocating, he spoke with a corrosive power unequaled in the history of American politics. In this time when the United States no longer can avoid hard and irrevocable decisions, the imaginative candor of John Randolph of Roanoke deserves rescue from obscurity."

It would be pleasant to report that Southerners nowadays have commenced that labor of rescuing Randolph from obscurity. Today the Southern states enjoy the benefits of huge charitable foundations and well-financed university presses, in addition to greater general prosperity than ever they have known before. Randolph's letters—many of them of high historical and literary interest—ought to be published in a volume or two, with good notes; Randolph's speeches—at present available only in the limited selection of my Randolph volume, or in dusty volumes of *The Annals of Congress* or of old Virginian newspapers hidden in the stacks of some big research library—ought to be printed and published as Calhoun's papers are being made available by the University of South Carolina Press.

But I know of no such pious undertaking. Mr. Kenneth Shorey has edited the correspondence of Randolph with his Richmond friend Dr. John Brockenbrough, and Troy State University Press has accepted the letters for publication—but the years pass, and the promised volume does not come from the press, doubtless for lack of subvention.

The insights that an understanding of Randolph still provides may be suggested by this passage from a House speech of his in 1813, when Randolph was one of the most unpopular men in the United States:

I have said, on a former occasion, and if I were Philip, I would employ a man to say it every day, that the people of this country, if ever they lose their liberties, will do it by sacrificing some great principle of government to temporary passion. There are certain great principles, which if they be not held inviolate, at all seasons, our liberty is gone. If we give them up, it is perfectly immaterial what is the character of our Sovereign; whether he be King or President, elective or hereditary—it is perfectly immaterial what is his character—we shall be slaves. It is not an elective government which will preserve us.

The continuing relevance of that hard truth to our age is sufficiently illustrated by the ruin of the constitutions of most of the world at the close of the twentieth century. Yet men in high political office continue to preach "one man, one vote" democracy as if it were a cure for all the ills to which flesh is heir.

T. S. Eliot reminds us that we cannot follow an antique drum to some fancied Zion of the past. But neither should we follow an electronic fife to some delusory Zion of the future. It is the admonitions of such as John Randolph that help to dissuade us from the latter course; but these farseeing partisans of order and justice and freedom are not readily encountered in our time of troubles; while the ideologue, thinking in slogans and talking in bullets, conducts us toward the Terrestrial Hell on the pretense that it is the Terrestrial Paradise.

Randolph's *Tertium Quids*, or Old Republicans, were no ideologues. Early in 1813, Randolph told the House of Representatives what the Republican party previously had stood for, and what he and the other *Tertium Quids* still maintained:

Is it necessary for men at this time of day to make a declaration of the principles of the Republican party? Is it possible that such a declaration could be deemed orthodox when proceeding from lips so unholy as those of an ex-communicant from that church? It is not necessary. These principles are on record; they are engraved upon it indelibly by the press and will live as long as the art of printing is suffered to exist. It is not for any man at this day to undertake to change them; it is not for any men, who then professed them, by any guise or circumspection, to conceal apostasy from them, for they are there—there in the book.... What are they? Love of peace, hatred of offensive war, jealousy of the state governments toward the general government; a dread of standing armies; a loathing of public debt, taxes, and excises; tenderness for the liberty of the citizen; jealousy, Argus-eyed jealousy, of the patronage of the President.

Such principles are not altogether outmoded. Yet quite beyond yesteryear's or today's political controversies, what Randolph of Roanoke gives us is a high example of political courage and candor, never obsolete. ☆

**John C. Calhoun Vindicated**  
*Russell Kirk*

1983

## INTRODUCTION

One hundred and forty years ago, Senator Henry Clay proposed a constitutional amendment to limit the veto power of the president of the United States. Senator John C. Calhoun replied to Clay; and that speech in reply is the most succinct version of Calhoun's famous doctrine of concurrent majorities. Calhoun argued, in effect, that there ought to exist several powers of veto upon the impulses of temporary numerical majorities.

"As the Government approaches nearer and nearer to the one absolute and single power, the will of the greater number, its action will become more and more disturbed and irregular; faction, corruption and anarchy, will more and more abound; patriotism will daily decay, and affection and reverence for the Government grow weaker and weaker until the final shock occurs, when the system will rush to ruin; and the sword take the place of law and Constitution." So Calhoun said in 1842.

The will of the greater number or, at least, the will of the Washington lobbies that claim to represent the greater number—generally prevails in American politics during these closing decades of the twentieth century. In our time, Chief Justice Warren and his colleagues, in their infinite wisdom reduced all political representation to a mathematical Benthamite basis, what John Randolph called King Numbers. What Calhoun described as "the numerical, or absolute majority" has triumphed altogether over the "concurrent majority" that he advocated.

During the same period the American Republic has ceased to be a nation of states. Deliberate centralization of power has reduced the states to a condition little better than that of provinces in an empire. Even squabbles between children and schoolteachers are gravely accepted for trial in federal district courts. The rising generation in this country is unaware that most of the centralization did not occur until the administration of President Lyndon Johnson.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, increasingly the federal government has divided the American people into two fiscal classes: those who pay the taxes and those who receive personal benefits from federal expenditures. This scheme of "transfer pay-

ments" will be egalitarian tyranny, Calhoun declared. The system already is deeply rooted.

Those are only three of the more important alterations in the Constitution of the United States, which had no stronger adherent—even in 1832—than Calhoun. These changes have been effected, chiefly in the past half century, without either formal amendment of the Constitution or conscious popular assent. Calhoun foresaw their coming. The unhappy consequences of these alterations are not yet fully felt. They will be.

We still live surrounded by souvenirs of Calhoun's era. Quite as some streets of Columbia and Charleston and surviving country houses in the neighborhood of Fort Hill are memorials of a more spirited time, so the bones of the Constitution still may be inspected. That something of our past remains quick—why, that is the achievement, in considerable part, of Calhoun and his school.

The frame of the society defended by Calhoun has been shattered nevertheless. After the elapse of another fourteen decades, will anything of the old order, political or moral, endure recognizably? Will the political and social alterations have grown so monstrous that the colossus called the United States will have become incapable even of self-defense?

One is tempted to concur with Chesterton's Eastern sages who "know all evil things" and are resigned to ruin:

*"The wise men know what wicked things  
Are written on the sky,  
They trim sad lamps, they touch sad strings,  
Hearing the heavy purple wings,  
Where the forgotten seraph kings  
Still plot how God shall die."*

Yet the example of Calhoun's fortitude heartens some of us to rally round the permanent things. As Burke reminded the rising generation in his time, what had seemed like ineluctable destiny for a people might be altered abruptly by a girl at the door of an inn, or by a common soldier. It is even conceivable, such is the mystery of providence, that the politics of John Caldwell Calhoun might fructify in the twenty-first century.

I wrote my reflection on Calhoun, published as a half-chapter in *The Conservative Mind*, just thirty years ago. On re-reading those pages, in the sixth edition of my book, I find that Calhoun seems to me more prescient now even than he did then. The kind of society to

which Calhoun gave his allegiance has lost much ground during the past three decades. That is one reason why Calhoun's phrases tell so keenly in the 'Eighties — and why the successive volumes of the first full edition of this writing, coming from the University of South Carolina Press, obtain some serious readers.

In his own time, Calhoun was best understood by a Yankee of Yankees, Orestes Brownson. Those two shared the conviction that though a man may sacrifice himself *for* the people, he must never sacrifice himself *to* the people. That high principle, along with much else, is our legacy from Calhoun. In one aspect Calhoun was the voice of what Henry Adams called "the sable genius of the South." In another aspect, Calhoun was the best exponent of that idea of political order which underlies both the written constitution and the unwritten constitution of the American Republic.

These lines are written in the teeth of a Michigan snowstorm at Piety Hill, your servant's counterpart of Fort Hill. Fourteen volumes of Calhoun's Papers confront me from my library shelves. They do not seem incongruous in this northern fastness. It would not be incongruous for us all to pay close attention to Calhoun during the Bicentenary of the Constitution of the United States.

### JOHN C. CALHOUN—CONSERVATIVE

That zeal which flared like Greek fire in Randolph burned in Calhoun, too; but it was contained in the Cast-Iron Man as in a furnace, and Calhoun's passion glowed out only through his eyes. No man was more stately, more reserved, more regularly governed by an inflexible will. Calvinism molded John C. Calhoun's character as it shaped his speeches and books; for though the dogma proper was dying in him as it had decayed in the Adamses—so that Calhoun, like John Adams, squinted toward Unitarianism—still there remained that relentless acceptance of logic, that rigid morality, that servitude to duty; and these things made the man constant in purpose, prodigious in energy.

Unlike Randolph—who possessed, along with his ancient lineage, the richest library in Virginia—all his life Calhoun was a man of few books, relying upon independent meditation. Although many degrees removed from Lincoln's "short and simple annals of the poor," the Calhouns were tough upcountry Carolinians, tried and purged in the Indian terrors of the border, belligerent champions of frontier

democracy. Where the boy Randolph read the English novelists and dramatists and Quixote and Gil Blas, the young Calhoun memorized passages from *The Rights of Man*. It was experience of the world, running contrary to his early discipline, that made of him a conservative. At Yale, when a student, he dared to confute the mighty Federalist professor Timothy Dwight; and he entered politics as a Jeffersonian, a nationalist and expansionist, an advocate of internal improvements, and a War Hawk. From the beginning he set his sights high; presently the presidency of the United States became his target. But one moving conviction, which in Calhoun overruled all his other ideas and even mastered his burning ambition, intervened to convert him into the most resolute enemy of national consolidation and of omnicompetent democratic majorities: his devotion to freedom. This principle ruined him as a politician. As a man of thought and force in history he was transfigured by it.

"If there be a political proposition universally true," Calhoun said, "one which springs directly from the nature of man, and is independent of circumstances,—it is, that irresponsible power is inconsistent with liberty, and must corrupt those who exercise it. On this great principle our political system rests." Calhoun loved the Constitution of the United States; in him was nothing of Randolph's suspicion of the federal organization from its very inception, "the butterfly with poison under its wings." Because he loved it, he brought it close to destruction in 1832. Because he loved it, he proposed that it be altered—or strengthened—to protect the rights of sectional minorities. Otherwise, said Calhoun, civil war would shake the nation to its foundations; and whatever the outcome of that war, the United States could never again be the same people under the same laws. He was a prophet wholly accurate.

To enter the labyrinth of dead politics and disappointed hopes within which Calhoun's first dozen years as a national politician were encompassed is not to our present purpose. Those were the years when Calhoun listened to Randolph's sarcastic passion, first with stiff antagonism, presently with drawing conviction; then the tariff of 1824 opened like a great crack in the earth before Calhoun, and he knew that in his early years he had sadly misunderstood the nature of politics and tendency of the nation. He had believed the Republic to be guided by a benevolent popular reason; and now it was manifest that if reason operated in the enactment of the new tariff, it was a malignant reason, calculated to plunder the people of one section in order to benefit a class of persons in another section of the country. Calhoun was no narrow particularist; he had shared the nationalistic

ambitions of 1812; but here he discovered a shameless imposition, a contempt for the right of the South so long as legislation benefited the constituents of a congressional majority. Calhoun had believed the Constitution a secure safeguard against oppression by section or class; and now it seemed that, given selfish interest sufficiently powerful, majorities would warp the Constitution to suit their ends. Calhoun had thought that an appeal to the popular sense of right could redress occasional legislative injustice; and now it could hardly be denied that Congressmen who voted for the tariff of 1824 merely were gratifying the avarice of the people they represented.

A mind like Calhoun's works solemnly and ponderously. He did not at once go over to Randolph and defiance; but with the passage of the years, Calhoun moved unflinchingly toward a repudiation of optimism, egalitarianism, meliorism and Jeffersonian democracy. Presently he had gone beyond Randolph. Calhoun passionately desired popularity and office, but he did not value these things above his conscience; therefore he surrendered his national reputation in order to protect his state, his section, his order and the traditions of American rural society. "Democracy, as I understand and accept it, requires me to sacrifice myself *for* the masses, not *to* them. Who knows not that if you would save the people, you must often oppose them?" And Calhoun thought he might be able to save something else besides: the Union. That he failed in every one of these hopes is undeniable. But he did succeed in endowing a dumb and bewildered Southern conservatism with political philosophy; and he described unequivocally the forbidding problem of the rights of individuals and groups menaced by the will of overbearing majorities.

"Stripped of all its covering," Calhoun declared in his terse and inexorable way, "the naked question is, whether ours is a federal or a consolidated government; a constitutional or absolute one; a government resting ultimately on the solid basis of sovereignty of the States or on the unrestrained will of a majority; a form of government, as in all other unlimitedness, in which injustice, and violence, and force must finally prevail." He was not speaking of South Carolina alone, nor even merely of the Southern states, Calhoun said: once the absolute power of majorities to do as they like with minorities is accepted, the liberties of no section or class are safe. Having reduced South Carolina to submission, the interests which passed the Tariff of Abominations and the Force Act would proceed to other conquests. He predicted a similar exploitation of industrial workers in the Northern cities: "After we are exhausted, the contest will be between the capitalists and the operatives; for into these two classes it

must, ultimately, divide society. The issue of the struggle here must be the same as it has been in Europe. Under the operation of the system, wages must sink more rapidly than the prices of the necessities of life, till the portion of the products of their labor left to them, will be barely sufficient to preserve existence. For the present, the pressure is on our section." These words were written in 1828, two decades before the promulgation of the Communist Manifesto; and they were written by the conservative planter of Fort Hill, who warned the old agricultural interest and the new industrial interest and the yet inchoate masses of industrial labor that when law is employed to oppress any class or section, the end of constitutions and the substitution of ruthless power is at hand. In this fashion the industrial conservatism of Alexander Hamilton, the great Northern manufacturing interest, was invited by the agricultural conservatism of John C. Calhoun to peer into the future.

Groping for a practical remedy, Calhoun turned to Nullification, derived from Jefferson's old Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions: a State might set at defiance any act of Congress clearly unconstitutional, refuse to allow that measure to operate within her boundaries, and appeal to the other states for aid and comfort, so that the unscrupulous majority which had enacted oppressive legislation might behold the power of laws and be compelled to withdraw their claims. Nullification, obviously, was a doctrine full of perils to national existence, and John Randolph told his constituents, "Nullification is nonsense" — a State could not at once be out of the Union and in the Union. President Jackson's intrepid temper had brought matters nearly to a test of force, in which South Carolina would have been crushed, when Henry Clay's compromise (reluctantly endorsed by Calhoun) ignored the principles at stake and for some years glossed over the tremendous problem by reducing the tariff.

Calhoun knew he had failed; and for the eighteen years of life that remained to him, he sought painfully for some means of reconciling majority claims with minority rights, under the rule of law. Nullification had succeeded just this far, that it proved power can be opposed successfully only by power. Yet the essence of civilized government is reliance not upon power, but upon consent. Can the rights of minorities be adjusted to this grand principle of consent? If not, government is an imposition. For, said Calhoun, governments at heart are designed chiefly to protect minorities — numerical minorities, or economic or sectional or religious or political. Preponderant majorities need no protection, and in a rude way can exist without proper government: they have naked force to maintain themselves. The au-

thors of the Constitution had recognized that government is the shelter of minorities, and had done their best to afford protection by strict limitation of federal powers and the added guarantee of a bill of rights. These had not sufficed:

We have acted, with some exceptions, as if the General Government had the right to interpret its own powers, without limitation or check; and though many circumstances have favored us, and greatly impeded the natural progress of events, under such an operation of the system, yet we already see, in whatever direction we turn our eyes, the growing symptoms of disorder and decay—the growth of faction, cupidity, and corruption; and the decay of patriotism, integrity, and disinterestedness. In the midst of youth, we see the flushed cheek, and the short and feverish breath, that mark the approach of the fatal hour; and come it will, unless there be a speedy and radical change—a return to the great conservative principles which brought the Republican party into authority, but which, with the possession of power and prosperity, it has long ceased to remember.

“Conservative principles”—here Calhoun, so early as 1832, had begun to discern a necessity greater than “liberalism” and “progress” and “equality.” These conservative principles, if efficacious, must be radical—they must go to the root of things; but their aim is to conserve freedom and order and the quiet old ways men love. Calhoun is talking of American “conservatism” in the year of the English Reform Bill, despite the customary dependence of America upon Britain for philosophical discoveries. One catches here a glimpse of the prescience of a solitary, powerful, melancholy mind which has pierced through the cloud of transitory political haggling to a future of social turbulence and moral desolation.

For eighteen years, then, Calhoun probed in his sober Scotch-Irish mind these conundrums; and in the year after his death there were published two treatises which condensed his meditations into a form as forceful and as logical as Calvin’s *Institutes*. The germ of his argument he had expressed cogently in a letter to William Smith, July 3, 1843: “The truth is—the Government of the uncontrolled numerical majority, is but the *absolute and despotic form of popular governments*;—just as that of the uncontrolled will of one man, or a few, is of monarchy or aristocracy; and it has, to say the least, it has as strong a tendency to oppression, and the abuse of its powers, as either of the others.” How is democratic government to be made consonant with justice? *A Disquisition on Government* endeavors to provide a general answer to this question; *A Discourse on the Constitution and Govern-*

*ment of the United States* is an application of these general principles to the exigencies of mid-nineteenth-century America.

"Whatever road one travels one comes at last upon the austere figure of Calhoun, commanding every highway of the southern mind," observes Parrington, with that picturesqueness he sometimes attains. "He subjected the philosophy of the fathers to critical analysis; pointed out wherein he conceived it to be faulty; cast aside some of its most sacred doctrines; provided another foundation for the democratic faith which he professed. And when he had finished the great work of reconstruction, the old Jeffersonianism that had satisfied the mind of Virginia was reduced to a thing of shreds and patches, acknowledged by his followers to have been mistaken philosophy, blinded by romantic idealism and led astray by French humanitarianism. Calhoun, therefore, completes the work of Randolph in demolishing Jefferson's abstract equality and liberty, which rights Jefferson had assumed to be complementary; and Calhoun, accepting Randolph's warning against the tyrannical tendencies inherent in the manipulation of positive law by callous majorities, struggles to devise an effective check upon numerical preponderance.

The old Senator from South Carolina, writing in haste because conscious of his approaching end, makes no endeavor to follow John Adams' historical method for studying effective checks upon arbitrary power. "What I propose is far more limited,—to explain on what principles government must be formed, in order to resist, by its own interior structure, or, to use a single term, *organism*,—the tendency to abuse power. This structure, or organism, is what is meant by constitution, in its strict and more usual sense." He has commenced, then, by employing a term which since has become of major significance in any discussion of the state, "organism"; and he proceeds in a tenor equally modern. He repudiates root and branch the compact theory of government, as had Burke (except for his metaphorical adaptation of the phrase) and John Adams; government is no more a matter of our choice than is our breathing, being instead the product of necessity. No "state of nature" in which man lived independent of his fellows ever did exist, nor ever can. "His natural state is, the social and political—the one for which his Creator made him, and the only one in which he can preserve and perfect his race." But *constitution*, far from being the product of necessity, must be the work of refined art; and without this tender construction, the end of government must in great measure be baffled. "Constitution is the contrivance of man, while government is of Divine ordination. Man is left to perfect what the wisdom of the Infi-

nite ordained."

Now true constitutions are always based upon the conservative principle: they are the product of a nation's struggles; they must spring from the bosom of the community: human sagacity is not adequate to construct them in the abstract. They are a natural growth; in a sense they are the voice of God expressed through the people; but nature and God work through historical experience, and all sound constitutions are effective embodiments of *compromise*. They reconcile the different interests or portions of the community with one another, in order to avert anarchy. "All constitutional governments, of whatever class they may be, take the sense of the community by its parts,—each through its appropriate organ; and regard the essence of all its parts as the sense of the whole. . . . And, hence, the great and broad distinction between governments is,—not that of the one, the few, or the many,—but that of the constitutional and the absolute."

We should not judge of whether a state is governed justly and freely by the abstract equality of its citizens, therefore. The real question is whether individuals and groups are protected in their separate interests, against monarch or majority, by a constitution founded upon compromise. If (for instance) government, by unequal fiscal action, divides the community into two principal classes of those who pay the taxes, and those who receive the benefits, this is tyranny, however egalitarian in theory. And so Calhoun comes to the doctrine of concurrent majorities, his most important single contribution to political thought. A true majority (to express the concept in its simplest terms) is not a simple headcount: instead, it is a balancing and compromising of interests, in which all important elements of the population concur, feeling that their rights have been respected:

There are two different modes in which the sense of the community may be taken; one simply by the right of suffrage, unaided; the other, by the right through a proper organism. Each collects the sense of the majority. But one regards numbers only, and considers the whole community as a unit, having but one common interest throughout; and collects the sense of the greater number of the whole, as that of the community. The other, on the contrary, regards interests as well as numbers,—considering the community as made up of different and conflicting interests, as far as the action of the government is concerned; and takes the sense of each, through its majority or appropriate organ, and the united sense of all, as the sense of the entire community. The former of these I shall call numerical, or absolute majority; and the latter, the concurrent, or constitutional majority.

Calhoun has rejected with scorn the demagogue's abstraction called "the people" No "people" exists as a body with identical, homogeneous interests; this is a fantasy of metaphysicians; in reality, there are only individuals and groups. Polling the numerical majority is an attempt to determine the sense of the people, but it is unlikely to ascertain the sense of the true majority; for the right of important groups may be altogether neglected under such arrangements. In his *Discourse on the Constitution*, Calhoun cites as an instance of this injustice the tendency of simple numerical majorities to throw all power into the grasp of an urban population, in effect disfranchising rural regions. "The relative weight of population depends as much on circumstances, as on number. The concentrated population of cities, for example, would ever have, under such a distribution, far more weight in the government, than the same number in the scattered and sparse population of the country. One hundred thousand individuals concentrated into a city two miles square, would have much more influence than the same number scattered over two hundred miles square.... To distribute power then, in proportion to population, would be, in fact, to give the control of government, in the end, to the cities; and to subject the rural and agricultural population to that description of population which usually congregate in them,—and, ultimately, to the dregs of the population."

In general, Calhoun's is a view similar to Disraeli's opinion that votes should be weighed, as well as counted; yet Calhoun proposes to weigh not merely the individual votes of particular persons, but the several wills of large groups in the nation. He proposes to take into account the differing economic elements, the geographical sections, perhaps yet other distinct interests; and they are to be protected from the encroachments of one another by a mutual negative, or rather a commonly available negative. "It is this negative power,—the power of preventing or arresting the action of the government,—be it called by what term it may,—veto, interposition, nullification, check, or balance of power,—which, in fact, forms the constitution. They are all but different names for the negative power." Perhaps such an arrangement invites the stalemate of the Polish *liberum veto*; but Calhoun believes that common convenience will dissuade these chief interests or groups from petty interference with the conduct of affairs. Promptness of action, indeed, is diminished, but a compensating gain in moral power occurs, for harmony and unanimity and the confidence of security from oppression make such a nation great. In neither of his treatises does Calhoun attempt to outline a precise reorganization of the American government upon

these principles, although he suggests that a plural executive might be one means of accomplishing the design: either member of the executive to represent a particular section and to conduct a particular portion of the executive business, such as foreign affairs or domestic matters, but the approval of both officers to be required for the ratification of acts of Congress. Calhoun states that true responsibility for accomplishing beneficial reorganization lies with the North, where the oppressive tariff and the anti-slavery agitation commenced; the North having set this train of events in motion, the North should be prepared to draw up a solution.

Democratic institutions will be safer in a state which has adopted the principle of concurrent majorities, Calhoun proceeds to demonstrate, and under such conditions the suffrage may be extended more widely than prudence would allow otherwise, "but it cannot be so far extended in those of the numerical majority, without placing them ultimately under the control of the more ignorant and dependent portions of the community." Where the theory of the *concurrent* majority prevails, the rich and the poor will not huddle in opposing camps, but will rank together under the respective banners of their sections and interests; the class struggle will be diminished by establishing a community advantage.

At this point, Calhoun enters upon a kind of digression concerning absolute liberty *vs.* real liberty. Application of the concurrent-majority principle, he says, will allow each section or region to shape its institutions according to its particular needs; a numerical majority tends to impose standardized and arbitrary patterns upon the whole nation, which is an outrage against social liberty. Two ends of government exist: to protect, and to perfect society. Historical origin, character of population, physical configuration, and a variety of other circumstances naturally distinguish one region from another. The means of protecting and perfecting these separate societies must vary accordingly. This is the doctrine of diversity, opposed to the doctrine of uniformity; Calhoun echoes Montesquieu and Burke.

Liberty and security are essential to the improvement of man, and the particular degree and regulation of liberty and security in any society should be locally determined; each people know their own needs best. "Liberty, indeed, though among the greatest of blessings, is not so great as that of protection; inasmuch, as the end of the former is the progress and improvement of the race, — while that of the latter is its preservation and perpetuation. And hence, when the two come into conflict, liberty must, and ever ought, to yield to protection; as the existence of the race is of greater moment

that its improvement." Calhoun is referring obliquely to the menace of slavery in the South, here, but with propriety he expresses himself in general terms. Some communities require a greater amount of power than others for self-protection; these local necessities would be recognized by the idea of the concurrent majority, or mutual right of veto.

Liberty *per se* presently becomes Calhoun's topic; and he severs himself completely from Jeffersonian theory. Liberty forced on a people unfit for it is a curse, bringing anarchy. Not all people are equally entitled to liberty, which is "the noblest and highest reward for the development of our faculties, moral and intellectual." Liberty and complete equality, far from being inseparable, are incompatible, if by pure equality is meant equality of *condition*. For progress, moral and material, is derived from inequality of condition; and without progress, liberty decays:

Now, as individuals differ greatly from each other in intelligence, sagacity, energy, perseverance, skill, habits of industry and economy, physical power, position and opportunity,—the necessary effect of leaving all free to exert themselves to better their condition, must be a corresponding inequality between those who may possess these qualities and advantages in a high degree, and those who may be deficient in them. The only means by which this result can be prevented are, either to impose such restrictions on the exertions of those who may possess them in a high degree, as will place them on a level with those who do not; or to deprive them of the fruits of their exertions. But to impose such restrictions on them would be destructive of liberty,—while, to deprive them of the fruits of their exertions, would be to destroy the desire of bettering their condition. It is, indeed, this inequality of condition between the front and rear ranks, in the march of progress, which gives so strong an impulse to the former to maintain their position, and to the latter to press forward into their files. This gives progress its greatest impulse. To force the front rank back to the rear, or attempt to push forward the rear into line with the front, by the interposition of the government, would put an end to the impulse, and effectually arrest the march of progress.

This is tellingly put, as neat an indictment of the social ennui latent in egalitarian collectivism as the literature of politics affords. Calhoun immediately adds, "These great and dangerous errors have their origin in the prevalent opinion that all men are born free and equal;—than which nothing can be more unfounded and false." He means his observations to be applied particularly to Negro slavery,

but one may lift them out of their transitory significance and fit them to the tenets of conservatism in our day.

Liberty and security, then, should be measured and applied upon practical and local considerations, rather than upon abstract claims of universal right. Real liberty is best secured by the concurrent majority, and thus the impetus toward progress which accompanies and nourishes liberty is healthiest under the harmony of concurrence. Yet is any arrangement of this sort possible in government? Are not great interests too diverse for concurrence, and is not agreement obtained too tardily for efficient action by the state? Calhoun believes he can answer these objections. Necessity will provide sufficient incentive. Cannot the twelve individuals who compose a jury manage to concur? Will not the necessity of mutual conciliation promote a common good feeling? Supreme among historical examples, was not this veto power an essential characteristic of the Roman Republic? Calhoun will confess the existence of no obstacle which practice and forbearance cannot surmount.

Some persons may object, says Calhoun, that a free press might accomplish all the good he expects from the principle of concurrent majority. So exalted an opinion of the function of newspapers may seem amusing in the twentieth century, the press not having followed that line of progress which nineteenth century optimists charted for it; but Calhoun answers the suggestion soberly. His argument is a passable summary of his whole doctrine of concurrence.

What is called public opinion, instead of being the united opinion of the whole community, is, usually, nothing more than the opinion or voice of the strongest interest, or combination of interests; and, not infrequently, of a small, but energetic and active portion of the whole. Public opinion, in relation to government and its policy, is as much divided and diversified, as are the interests of the community; and the press, instead of being the organ of the whole, is usually but the organ of these various and diversified interests respectively; or, rather, of the parties growing out of them. It is used by them as the means of controlling public opinion, and of so moulding it, as to promote their peculiar interests, and to aid in carrying on the warfare of party. But as the organ and instrument of parties, in government of the numerical majority, it is as incompetent as suffrage itself, to counteract the tendency to oppression and abuse of power; —and can, no more than that, supersede the necessity of the concurrent majority.

Bold and fertile opinions, these. Calhoun's *Disquisition* is open to many of the objections that commonly apply to detailed projects for political reform. He slides quickly over formidable objections, he evades any very precise description of how the principle may be applied, and he really has small hope of any immediate practical consequence from these ideas. Yet these flaws yawn more conspicuously in the great popular reform-schemes of our era — Marxism, Fabian Socialism, distributism, syndicalism, production-planning. Calhoun is not playing Lycurgus; he is describing a philosophical principle, and it is one of the most sagacious and vigorous suggestions ever advanced by American conservatism. The concurrent majority itself; representation of citizens by section and interest, rather than by pure numbers; the insight that liberty is a product of civilization and a reward of virtue, not an abstract right; the acute distinction between moral equality and equality of condition; the linking of liberty and progress; the strong protest against domination by class or region, under the guise of numerical majority — these concepts, provocative of thought and capable of modern application, give Calhoun a place beside John Adams as one of the two most eminent American political writers. Calhoun demonstrated that conservatism can project as well as complain.

Randolph's sombre devotion descends into the violence of Beverley Tucker's *Partisan Leader*; Calhoun's exacting logic is followed by a decade of fire-eating, and then explosion. So far as preservation of the Old South was concerned, their conservatism was impotent — indeed, it hurried the Southern states along the road to the Civil War, which in five years did more to extirpate Southern society than a generation of civil domination by the North could have effected. The repressive nervousness of the South after Nullification was no atmosphere encouraging to serious thought, and the poverty of spirit and body which, like an Old Man of the Sea, clung upon Reconstruction discouraged any respectable intellectual conservatism. Only vague cautionary impulses guided the South after 1865, combining with popular distrust of the Negro, and lack of material resources to slacken the rate of social alteration. The modern South cannot be said to obey any consciously conservative ideas — only conservative instincts, exposed to all the corruption that instinct unlit by principle encounters in a literate age. The affection for state sovereignty, the duties of a gentleman, and the traditions of society which Randolph and Calhoun extolled found their finest embodiment in General Lee;

and, with Lee, these ideas yielded to superior force at Appomattox. The political representative of those principles was a man of parts less exemplary than Lee's, but still a man of high courage and dignity, Jefferson Davis. Eighty years later, progressive vulgarization of those Southern instincts put into the Mississippi senatorship that had been Davis' such a man as Theodore Bilbo.

Randolph and Calhoun left no disciples really worthy of their preceptors, nor did they save the planter-society. Those Southern fears and prejudices which Randolph's erratic brilliance sublimated into aristocratic libertarianism, and which Calhoun's precise wisdom compressed into a legal brief, broke free from the slender tether by which these two lonely minds had controlled their fierce energy. The force of Southern popular enthusiasm was smashed by the younger violence of Northern industrialism and nationalism; long thereafter, the Southern people groped dazed through the dark wood of the modern world, unhappily envious of a mechanized age which was not meant for such as they.

The great majority of Southern people, indeed, never apprehended much more of the doctrines of Randolph and Calhoun than their apology for slavery and its defense through state powers. The more subtle and enduring details of the conservatism for which these statesmen spoke were lost upon the common Southern mind—their distrust of popular fancies, their anxiety for continuity of institutions, their devotion to an ennobling liberty. Within the South itself, the levelling and innovating urge that everywhere dominated American life was at work remorselessly all the while Southern orators paid lip-service to the Virginian orator and the Carolinian prophet. A series of state constitution conventions—Virginia's in 1829–1830 only the first—swept away those protections for property, those delicate balances of power, and those advantages of compromise which Randolph and Calhoun praised; the new constitutions expressed the triumph of doctrinaire alteration. North Carolina in 1835, Maryland in 1836, Georgia in 1839; a second wave in the 'fifties, with change coming to Maryland in 1850–51, for a second time to Virginia in 1850, and, in the form of constitutional amendments, a large alteration of the Georgia constitution still farther during those years—these popular victories brought greater equality of abstract political right, but hardly greater freedom. Popular demands for equality and simplicity met with no effective opposition in the new Southern states—Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida. Thus the way was cleared for the radical constitutions of Reconstruction days, the subsequent disgrace and reaction, and the permanently blighted character of

### Southern political life.

Democratization and simplification of government were not peculiar to the South, of course, being only the local manifestation of a national tendency; Chancellor Kent, in New York, spoke against it as bitterly as did Randolph in Virginia. The Southern planter-aristocracy could no more withstand this tide of feeling than could, in the North, the Federalists and their heirs the Whigs. Better than anyone else, Tocqueville analyzes this American enthusiasm for constitutional alteration and social levelling. It was the expansive impulse of a people whose links with traditional society were nearly severed and among whom the wide distribution of new land diminished reverence for magistrates and establishments; Rousseau and Paine and even Jefferson did no more than furnish the tinsel with which this buoyant social impulse was trimmed. In America most of all, during the universal flux of the nineteenth century, *things* were in the saddle. Randolph and Calhoun could forge the South into a section, could rally Southerners to a defense of their own economic interests, could impress upon the popular imagination the menace of centralization to the Peculiar Institution; but their talents were insufficient to reinvigorate deeper conservative ideas even in a region so much inclined toward old ways as were the Southern states. They did not much impede the advance of those impulses toward consolidation, secularization, industrialism, and levelling which were everywhere the characteristics of nineteenth-century social innovation.

Randolph and Calhoun both discerned with a good deal of acuity the nature of the threat to tradition, but they could oppose to these revolutionary energies hardly more than their vaticinations and their ability to rouse a rough and confused spirit of particularism among the mass of Southerners. This was not enough. Despite its faults of head and heart, the South—alone among the civilized communities of the nineteenth century—had hardihood sufficient for an appeal to arms against the iron new order which, a vague instinct whispered to Southerners, was inimical to the sort of humanity they knew. Grant and Sherman ground their valor into powder, Emancipation and Reconstruction demolished the loose structures of their old society, economic subjugation crushed them into the productive machine of modern times. No political philosophy has had a briefer span of triumph than that accorded to Randolph's and Calhoun's.

Yet they deserve to be remembered, these devoted Southern leaders — Randolph for the quality of his imagination, Calhoun for the sternness of his logic. They illustrate the truth that conservatism is something deeper than mere defense of shares and dividends, some-

thing nobler than mere dread of what is new; their arguments, and even their failure, reveal how intricately linked are economic change, state policy, and the fragile tissue of social tranquility. Perhaps Randolph and Calhoun and other Southern statesmen did not employ to the full that transcendent conservative virtue of prudence which Burke so often commends. But their provocation was severe; and the echo of the fight which a doomed Southern conservatism waged in the name of prescriptive rights has not yet died in the enormous smoky cavern of modern American life. ☆

**Through European Eyes****1985***Paul Gottfried*

Historians have long misinterpreted the responses of Europeans to the events of the American War Between the States. One of the earliest cases in point was Karl Marx, who considered himself a scientific historian and a knowledgeable commentator on the great American Crisis. Writing on December 12, 1862, about the Emancipation Proclamation, Marx praised Lincoln's capacity to "accomplish the most significant things in the least conspicuous way possible." Marx was convinced that Lincoln would win the hearts and minds of the European working class by making a morally compelling case for the Union. However snidely English newspapers treated Lincoln's rustic manners, Marx was convinced that European workers and progressives would rally to support the Great Emancipator.

Marx's view of Lincoln is puzzling for at least two reasons. One, Marx claimed to be an historical materialist who saw ideas as derivative from economic circumstances. Yet, in the matter of refounding the American regime, he had faith in the power of Lincoln's hidden moral vision to touch everywhere proletariat souls. This would occur, or so Marx believed, despite the military-strategic purpose of the Proclamation and despite the resentment of millworkers in Lancashire and in other English industrial centers left jobless because of the Northern blockade of the cotton-producing South.

Two, Marx pitifully misread Europe's reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation. The document was widely ridiculed as an example of military-political opportunism cloaked in moral righteousness.

Contrary to another common textbook misconception, pro-Confederate, and certainly anti-Union, sentiment was not limited in England to Tory aristocratic circles. The self-serving reports of Northern diplomats in England often seemed to indicate such a situation, but Lincoln's shrewd ambassador in London, Charles Francis Adams, knew better. The Union side had few friends in England in the fall of 1861. Lincoln had dared to impose a blockade on Southern ports; though he and his Secretary of State, William Seward, had assured the British earlier that the War was no more than an American internal matter. British ships were seized trying to trade with the South. To make matters even worse, a Union naval officer, Charles Wilkes, on November 8, 1861 captured an English mail steamer en route to Southampton from Havana. Wilkes abducted two passengers, both Confederate commissioners, James Murray Mason and John Slidell, whom he subsequently brought to Boston as prisoners.

In England cries of outrage and demands for the release of Mason and Slidell came from every social class. Significantly, it was the royal family and the very aristocratic British ambassador to Washington, Lord Lyons, who frustrated the popular will for revenge. Prince Albert and Lord Lyons turned the English government's ultimatum into a mere admonition, followed by negotiable demands for Mason's and Slidell's release.

The most vocal support for the Union in England came from liberal and radical democratic reformers. Richard Cobden and John Bright, on the democratic capitalist Right; John Stuart Mill and John Elliot Cairnes, both feminists and social democrats; and Marx and Friedrich Engels, on the revolutionary socialist Left, typified the Union's hard-core ideological support in England. But the more realistic observers among this band had no illusions about their small numbers. In a revealing comment published in 1862 in *Westminster Review*, John Stuart Mill lamented, "Why is the general voice of our press, the general sentiment of our people bitterly reproachful toward the North while for the South, the aggressor in the war, we have either mild apologies or direct and downright encouragement? And this is not only from the Tory and anti-democratic camp, but from liberals, or *soidisant* such." Mill had noticed that classical liberal publicists and journals were applauding the Confederacy for its defense of free trade. Conversely, they criticized the Union and Lincoln's Republican Party for their support of tariffs. One liberal, anti-slavery journal with wide readership, the *Economist*, argued early in the war that an independent Confederacy, devoted to free trade, was more likely to abolish slavery than a South subjugated by the North. Even after the Emancipation Proclamation, the *Economist* remained generally unsympathetic to the Northern side.

In France the government was perhaps more open than in England in expressing support for the Confederates. The Southern commissioner, John Slidell, developed warm relations with Louis Napoleon and his ministers. Largely because of Slidell's influence in Paris, the South obtained naval supplies and other assistance from France throughout the War. The French Emperor knew of the role being played by Francophile Southerners and Southerners of French extraction in the Confederate cause, particularly in Slidell's own state of Louisiana. Louis Napoleon's attempt, starting in 1862, to take over Mexico, made him even more favorable to an independent Confederacy, especially one beholden to him for its freedom.

Contrary to what Marx and Mill might have wished, the Union drew its major European political support from backward, autocratic

Russia. The North also enjoyed superlative relations with Bismarck's Prussia. Though Bismarck, as a landed aristocrat, felt an affinity for the Southern gentry, in foreign policy he inclined toward the American North and Tsarist Russia. Prussian military observers accompanied Sherman and Grant on their campaigns, and they paid their grisled hosts the supreme compliment of imitation. In 1866 the Prussian army defeated the Austrians by applying the technological advances which the American North had used against the American South.

The Russian connection that the Union diligently cultivated was, ironically, the work of Lincoln's enemies. The pro-Southern Democrat James Buchanan, while ambassador at St. Petersburg in the 1830s, had negotiated commercial treaties with the Tsar's ministers. After the Crimean War, the future secessionist governor of South Carolina, Francis W. Pickens, worked as ambassador to the Russian court, to improve Russo-American relations. Russia was then seeking to break out of the political isolation that had befallen her during and after the Crimean War. That war had begun when Russian advances against the decaying Turkish empire had brought about an anti-Russian coalition led by England and France. During the almost two-year war that was fought around the Black Sea and in the Crimea, Russia had stood alone against the Western power. Even the Hapsburg Empire—to which she had sent soldiers to put down Hungarian rebels in 1849—abandoned Russia by 1854. The Austrian Imperial government was terrified by the prospect of Russian expansion into the Balkans, if the Turks were driven from the region.

For Russia, the main enemy during and after the Crimean War was Lord Palmerston's England. England, after all, had been the architect of the anti-Russian combine of the 1850s, and by the 1860s was creating for herself a Central Asian empire in competition with Russia. Pickens and, later, Seward presented the Americans as a countervailing force to Russia's Western enemies. But the Russians wished to believe this in any case. Two days before Georgia's secession Edward Stoekl, the Russian ambassador to Washington, bared his breast in a letter to Prince Alexander Gorchakov: "Great Britain seems to enjoy a stroke of fortune rare in history. She alone will profit by the destruction of the United States, but it will be fatal to the rest of the world." Soon after, in communicating with Seward, Gorchakov described the Union as "an essential element in the political equilibrium of the world" and as "the only commercial counterpoise to Great Britain."

The diplomatic evidence suggests that Russia and the Union were linked almost exclusively by ties of *Realpolitik*. The notion of Lincoln

and Tsar Alexander II choosing each other as role models for emancipating serfs and slaves is simply a textbook fiction. Alexander freed his serfs—that is, put them under Tsarist supervision—before it became clear that Lincoln would emancipate Negro slaves. Moreover, Lincoln, from all available evidence, disliked Tsarist Russia. He had violently and repeatedly denounced it in the 1850s for mistreating the Hungarians and for suppressing national minorities. Indeed it was the Southerner Pickens, not Lincoln, Seward, or any Republican, who pursued the Russian connection on the eve of the War Between the States.

Dennis Reinhartz, writing for *Continuity*, maintains that the Russian connection was the keystone of Lincoln's foreign policy. One might add that it was the trump card that the proto-secessionist Pickens handed to his adversaries, even before the firing on Fort Sumter. Lincoln would play this card against England and, indirectly, France to keep the Confederates from building firmer ties with Europe. The Union's relationship with Russia was a cause for concern in the English government. In 1863 Palmerston backed down in trying to force Russia to moderate her policies in Poland. Faced by a Russia no longer isolated, Palmerston reneged on his assurance to Louis Napoleon that their two countries would take a hard line on the Polish question.

Louis Napoleon also played Lincoln's game, because of his ties to England. Since the events leading to the Crimean War, the French Emperor had tried to construct a privileged relationship with England, against the two Eastern powers, Russia and Austria. His biographer, Albert Guerard, describes his often frustrated, but persistent efforts on behalf of this policy: "[He] sought England's friendship. He won over the fiery Palmerston, an old enemy of France, Queen Victoria, and Prince Albert. But these were personal victories; under a tone of acidulous or ironic courtesy the policy of the English government was completely anti-French; and English public opinion spurned even that diplomatic veil." Although Guerard may exaggerate English Francophobia in the 1860s, he is correct in stressing Louis Napoleon's attempt to undo the effects of the first Napoleon's hostile relations with England. Louis Napoleon grimly accepted Palmerston's about-face on Poland and waited for England to move first in recognizing the Confederacy.

This brings us to a final misconception that historians have spread about diplomacy during the War. In John D. Hicks' *The Federal Union*, one of the last patriotic American history textbooks used in our schools, he insists on treating Southern leaders and diplomats

as lacklustre foils to their Union counterparts. To underscore Charles Francis Adams' diplomatic skills, he depicts William Yancey and, even more, James Mason as blundering neophytes in international affairs. Southern commissioners in Europe supposedly idled around, or paid lavish court on aristocrats, while waiting for bales of cotton to be shipped from Savannah, New Orleans, and Mobile. They foolishly believed that the need for King Cotton in Europe would open all diplomatic doors for them.

With all due respect to Hicks and other critics of Southern diplomacy, the Confederate commissioners in England and France were not inferior to their opposite numbers. Both Charles Francis and Henry Adams paid grudging respect to Mason as a resourceful adversary. Slidell was a polished, apt diplomat who made heroic efforts to pull Louis Napoleon out of the English into the Southern orbit. With no real bargaining chips, Confederate representatives in Spain worked doggedly to extract assistance there, promising to support (whatever that meant) Spanish claims to Santa Domingo. Southern commissioners failed to win recognition for their side from European states because they had been dealt a bad hand.

But other factors also weighed on the international scene. The South was hurt by its financial problems, such as the failed opportunity to market its cotton crop in Europe. The North, by contrast, benefited even from its material difficulties. In 1863 the American North ran an unfavorable balance of trade with Europe totalling 54 million dollars. This figure rose to 91 million dollars by 1864 and was paid for in species—European countries having no faith in either Union or Confederate paper money. The European, particularly English, middle class sold many consumer commodities to the North, which had gone over to a wartime economy. Although the English also sold to the South, which they furnished with commercial destroyers, the blockade and growing indigence throughout the war-ravaged Confederacy made it commercially less valuable to Europeans than the North. Outside the textile trade, European commerce benefited from having the North at war. Recognition of the South by major European powers might have ended the profitable conflict—or have turned the North against its European trade partners.

It is of course unlikely that European recognition would have done much to change the course of events after 1863. Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and the other Union victories of that year made Northern leaders believe their war was winnable. As in the case of Southern military efforts, the war on the diplomatic front could only have been won in the early stages of the struggle. Then it still would have

been possible to force a demoralized Union to the peace table, through a combination of military victory and diplomatic breakthroughs. Afterwards harsh economic, geopolitical, and demographic realities were inevitably decisive. ☆

**Transcendentalism:  
The New England Heresy**  
*Otto J. Scott*

**1982**

In 1855 *Putnam's Monthly* carried an article by the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson describing an African village. The villagers, according to Higginson, were "active, commercial geniuses," who enjoyed "a remarkable language, and an even more remarkable recollection of proverbs." In fact, they resembled New Englanders. They were mechanically inventive and commercially fruitful. Their advanced culture was described by Higginson in glowing terms. Unfortunately nobody—then or later—has ever been able to locate that village.

Sir Richard Burton did, however, locate Agboney, the capital of Dahomey in West Africa, in 1863. Burton described an execution shed where sacrificial victims were sedated on stools, tied to poles, and fed four times a day. They wore long white nightcaps, calico shirts and shorts. Burton watched as these individuals were placed in wicker baskets and hurled to their deaths off a high cliff. After that, various unpleasant mutilations were committed on their cadavers.

Gelele, the king of Dahomey, was a pious man. His religion mandated that he keep his dead father informed of all developments in the kingdom on a regular, daily basis. Messengers carrying this information to the spirit world had, themselves, to be killed in order to enter that realm. There were times when the king would send a message, then recall some overlooked detail, and dispatch another man with the addition. Many, in this manner, were executed in the course of a continuing routine. Burton knew that Dahomey was not unique in conducting human sacrifices. His travels through the Orient had inured him to such practices. Religion in many regions took grotesque forms in the mid-19th century.

In the 1850s and '60s the British struggled against the Hindu practice of suttee—in which widows were incinerated on the funeral pyres of their husbands. The Chinese also practiced suttee, but not, usually, by fire. Most of the widows cut their throats, or hanged themselves, or leaped from cliffs. Such acts of devotion on the part of widows were widespread throughout the Orient. So, for that matter, was headhunting. The Brookes, who ruled the Dyaks, were constantly besieged for permits to headhunt. The Dutch in Borneo had a very hard time ending the practice, which was "in full swing" in the 1860s.

Similar practices, including cannibalism, were practiced in New

Guinea and Fiji, in Tahiti—that Pacific “Paradise,” and Hawaii—another idyllic region where retrospective romantics have blamed Christian missionaries for darkening the lives of innocent pagans by halting their amusements, and extirpating their religious cults.

These observations do not constitute condemnation. The civilization of India is universally acknowledged to have been of a high and ancient level for immense periods of time. The same is true of China and of many of the people of the Orient. Pacifica harbored much of value, and so—for that matter—did and does Africa.

The purpose in recalling to mind some of the more outlandish practices of various nations and people that continued into the 1860s is to remind the modern reader of what Christianity ended in many parts of the world. The 19th century was a period when much of this struggle took place, under the colonial system.

But even as this struggle was under way, there were some in the West, themselves descended from eminent Christians and including some clergymen, who seemed to believe that it was Christianity that was retrograde, and other religions that were advanced. One of these was Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Sage of Concord. He steeped himself in the Bhagavad-Gita, the Song of the Lord. In this Vishnu is first seen as a benevolent creator—and later the destroyer of all life. *beyond good and evil.*

Nigel Davies, a British scholar who has studied human sacrifice, observed that in Oriental and many other religions, the Deity is held to be simultaneously good and evil. Such a belief places no bounds on behavior, for a God that accepts murder as equal in virtue with charity allows anything. That idea has been very difficult for Westerners to discern and to accept, for the West was founded on Christianity. Christianity teaches that God is good, and evil is the enemy. A Christian who does evil disobeys his religion. In terms of sacrifice, Christianity teaches that the need for sacrifice ended with the Crucifixion. But when Christianity began to lose some of its congregation (and this loss, constant on the peripheries, became torrential with the European discovery of other races and ways), the knowledge of these clear distinctions grew dim for many. Emerson was one of these.

It cannot be truthfully said that he was a pioneer in this respect. Emerson was the heir, in a direct line, of seven generations of ministers. It was his original intention to continue in this vocation, and it was his misfortune to study under the Reverend William Ellery Channing, who seemed determined to prove that a minister could be almost free of creeds. Channing, deeply influenced by his readings in

Voltaire, Paine and the philosophers of the Enlightenment, was a littérateur with pretensions. Hazlitt said his writings "cannot be called commonplace, but they may be fairly termed ambitious commonplace." Channing was praised by English Unitarians, who had discarded virtually all the beliefs of Christianity and who worshipped an abstract God. Channing permanently influenced Emerson in these and similar directions. Emerson called Channing "our Bishop."

In turn Emerson became the center of a New England cult that spent much of the 1830s and 1840s denigrating traditional Christianity, criticizing the industrial revolution, and talking—in generally ignorant terms—about the "philosophies" of the Orient and of ancient Greece.

The Reverend Emerson was not, however, alone in his fascination. Although he became a central figure in what was called the "New England religion" (which was distinctly apart and antagonistic to traditional Christianity), the Transcendentalists paralleled another Northern group that insisted it was Christian, but whose activities were equally untraditional.

This began in New York State when the Tappan brothers—philanthropists—and others began to try to apply the ideals described in a flood of religious tracts. Their belief was that sin could be removed from the world, if enough people made nuisances enough of themselves. They launched "crusades" against liquor, smoking, breaking the Sabbath and other presumed social evils, and epitomized the kill-joys who have, since then, been incorrectly equated with Puritans. In time the New York zealots attracted and converted Charles Grandison Finney, an eloquent, handsome lawyer who argued against every tenet of Protestantism that had until then held most Americans together.

Where the Calvinists had stressed that salvation is through the grace of God alone, beyond the reach of any individual to command, Finney preached that repentance brought sinners into an automatic heaven. He also embraced the social efforts of the tractarians. One result was that he set upstate New York into religious turmoil, and twisted traditional Christianity into the peculiar shape it bears in the United States today.

One of Finney's converts was Theodore Weld, who translated Finney's theology into action. It is important to recognize that these sincere though overly ambitious groups gradually moved their followers away from traditional Christianity. Weld himself shifted from religious preachments directed at social problems to political lobbying. He moved to Washington and worked with various politicians.

At the same time, the Transcendentalists turned not only from the churches, but also from purely literary pursuits to become involved in the Free Soil, third party movement. Emerson did not appear in the foreground in such efforts, but was always available as an advisor. He did, however, abandon the ministry, as did many of his clerical colleagues in the Transcendental movement. In 1850 both groups began to come together in the abolitionist movement.

William Lloyd Garrison and his followers constituted a third force. Garrison's vitriol virtually destroyed the peaceful emancipation movement that had earlier existed in Virginia and other parts of the South. His publications worked as corrosive acid upon all fraternal bonds between the states. He mounted a campaign against the churches unbounded in its ferocity. He called the Methodists "a cage of unclean birds and a synagogue of Satan." Irate over being informed by orthodox Presbyterians that neither the Old nor the New Testament contained any criticism of slavery, Garrison announced that slavery was a sin. That argument made antislavery a theological issue. If slavery was a sin and Christians had allowed it to persist for centuries, then Christianity in the United States was unworthy of support.

The South was incensed to be attacked on religious grounds over an issue formerly considered part of the political sphere. In England slavery had been ended, but not abruptly, by political compromise. A compromise was masterminded by Illinois Senator Douglas and smoothly pushed through the Senate by Henry Clay and Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster. It was probably the bravest and best act of Webster's entire career—and he was ruined by it.

The Transcendentalists rose in wrath; Theodore Parker compared Webster to Benedict Arnold. Edmund Quincy called him a lion turned to a spaniel, and Emerson deplored his "profound selfishness."

No single political step created more disorder in the North than the Fugitive Slave Act, which brought the abolitionists into open conflict with the law. Their defense was, essentially, religious. Their creed was that slavery was a sin, and that unbounded opposition was a sacred duty.

Had this argument remained intellectual it might have achieved a peaceful goal. But the abolitionists did not deign to persuade: they demanded. In any event, they were not peaceful. And because they were reflecting a religious position, they relied to a great extent upon the argument that a struggle against sin transcends the law. Emerson declared that an immoral law was automatically void. The Sage seemed serenely unaware that he placed his own judgment

above that of the courts; he seemed to believe that he was being merely reasonable.

A similar arrogance suffused abolitionism in general. The members of the movement assumed a Pharisaical attitude of being holier than all others, and seemed peculiarly insensitive to the wounds they inflicted upon others in the name of virtue.

One reason for this complacency may have been the sheer physical distance between New England and the South. But another reason was the rise of the Northern press. In the 1850s the high-speed newspaper press came into service, *The New York Tribune* under Horace Greeley, a fervent abolitionist, became the largest newspaper in the land. Abolitionist writers, lecturers, poets, authors and clergy produced a torrent of literature, expositions, publications and arguments throughout the North. That this output created an illusion was not easily discerned. The average householder might not, in reality, have shared abolitionist sentiments—but the Northern press seemed to speak with the voice of millions.

In the mid-1850s, with raging demonstrations against the Fugitive Slave Act under way in the North, troubles appeared in the Kansas Territory. This skein is too elaborate to be accurately unraveled in an article. Let it suffice to say that in Kansas rhetoric leaped into violence through the initial exertions of old John Brown.

Brown was considered, in the latter half of the 19th century, a hero second only to Lincoln. Even today his name continues to appear, favorably, long after his multiple crimes have been laid bare, and his terrible and shameful career acknowledged by even his admirers.

The reasons for this are essentially religious—but not Christian. They were made plain by Brown himself, in his various letters and especially in his speeches in court at Charlestown, Virginia, in 1859. He arrived there, as every schoolchild knows, by way of assaulting the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, in an effort to obtain and distribute guns to the slaves of Virginia, in the hope of inciting a servile insurrection.

He had worked toward that effort for over three years, and for the whole of that time had been financed, assisted, encouraged and promoted by a half dozen wealthy and influential New Englanders who called themselves the "Committee of Six." Historians know them as "The Secret Six," though they are no longer secret.

They consisted of the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the Reverend Theodore Parker, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, George Luther Stearns and Gerrit Smith. There

was once a time when none of these names needed any description: all the bearers were famous. The Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson was a frequent contributor to the largest magazines in the land and a well-known pastor and abolitionist. The Reverend Theodore Parker was the most famous preacher in all the United States; his sermons were telegraphed and reprinted in their entirety in England. Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe had penetrated the dark and silent world of the blind, deaf and mute, and his methods came down to reach Helen Keller. Dr. Howe's Perkins Institute in Boston was world famous; he had fought for Greek Independence at the same time as Lord Byron, he was a Chevalier, and married to the beautiful Julia Ward Howe. Franklin Benjamin Sanborn was not as widely known as the others, but he was the tutor of the Emerson children, a wealthy man, and in his long life became a famous and powerful social worker. George Luther Stearns was a prosperous manufacturer, and Gerrit Smith was so rich that he was known to virtually every American. Smith owned more land than any other individual in the state of New York; his father had been a partner of John Jacob Astor.

It was as though Billy Graham, David Rockefeller, Dr. Jonas Salk, Henry Ford II, Dr. Russell Kirk and the Reverend Jerry Falwell had all been discovered financing a communist revolution.

When Brown was first captured by Jeb Stuart and Robert E. Lee, the Six took alarm. For reasons that have never been explained, old Brown had lugged many of their letters to him around with him, and these were incriminating to an extent that seemed undeniable. Gerrit Smith ran to his office, rummaged through his files and burned his correspondence from Brown, Sanborn and Stearns. During the next few weeks he grew increasingly agitated, and a few days after Brown was sentenced, entered the Lunatic Asylum in Utica, New York. His doctors forbade visitors.

Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, the hero of Greek Independence, fled to Canada with George Luther Stearns. Frank Sanborn, who had told Brown he would always treasure every note, destroyed them and ran to Quebec. The Reverend Higginson, alone among the Six, stood his ground and refused to run. The Reverend Theodore Parker, ill in Rome, wrote brave letters from afar—but neither admitted his complicity nor made any effort to return.

As the trial of "Captain" Brown progressed, however, most of the Six (with the exception of millionaire Gerrit Smith) recovered their nerve. Their courage returned as the newspapers of the North began to rebuild Brown's image.

The campaign rose as Brown orated in court. At first, the papers had announced a slave insurrection. The nature of the raid became clear, as letters from the Six were discovered and published. Then Brown began to talk. His argument was that he had fought against slavery in an honorable way, and should be treated as a prisoner of war. When sentenced, he quoted the Bible, protested he had struggled on behalf of the "despised poor," and that he would "forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country...." Brown was fond of talk about blood, and the need to shed blood to remit sins.

His statement was repeated and beamed everywhere by the press of the North and floods of letters arrived in Virginia pleading for Brown's life. A stream of highly placed visitors arrived to see him in the Charlestown prison and even the usually balanced Allan Nevins said Brown rose to "heights of moral grandeur."

In reality Brown behaved much as did the victims of sacrifice in other climes. It was unheard of for those selected for holy execution to display anything but the utmost calm. Their deaths were held necessary in the Orient, Pacific, Africa, India and other parts, because the gods demanded sacrifices—for the good of the majority.

While Brown awaited execution, the Northern newspapers hailed the event as a final blow against slavery which would set all America free. In Brooklyn the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher said, "Let no man pray that Brown be spared. Let Virginia make him a martyr. His soul was noble but his work miserable. But a cord and a gibbet will redeem all that...."

On execution day bells tolled throughout the North. Public meetings were held, and guns were fired. Buildings were draped in black. Newspapers appeared in special editions, with Brown's picture black bordered. Emerson said, "He makes the gallows as glorious as the Cross," and that Brown was "a new saint in the calendar." Longfellow entered the day in history as "The date of a new revolution, quite as much needed as the old one." Dr. Cheevers' sermon treated Brown as "an incarnation of God's protest against slavery." William Dean Howells wrote, "Brown has become an idea."

With this apotheosis, the United States moved into a new religion. Its first saint was a multiple murderer and thief whose only glory was in the goals he stated for himself, and whose sins were not considered evil. Ancient paganism had risen inside Christendom, within a nation that prided itself, in the 19th century, on its religiosity—but not its spirituality. This turn in the theological road, directly attribut-

able to an ignorance of history and the nature of other cultures, was the heresy that led to the Civil War.

The South watched the Northern paroxysms with fear and horror. The whites of the South became convinced that Northerners wanted their massacre to the last mother and child, in the name of slaves. That winter, when Congress reconvened, Senators and Representatives appeared carrying guns and knives. The abolitionists, fired by the example of their new saint, were convinced that all Southerners were steeped in sin, and that only blood could wash away their guilt. That conviction resulted in a long, terrible war and punitive peace.

If that ended the issue, the United States and the rest of the world would have counted the cost high, but by now paid and forgotten. Unfortunately it was not the end, nor even the beginning of the end. A combination of unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances had created the legend of John Brown. Journalists had used the high-speed press and telegraph to spread a false image of events to the people; to shroud crime in the robe of virtue. Such deception conducted with the instruments of a new technology worked as effectively as had drums, incense and dancing in the past. They helped to create and disseminate the image of a hero simultaneously good and evil, whose actions were above all law.

This innovation was not lost upon watchful Europe, and especially not lost upon European revolutionaries. They saw the Western equivalent of Oriental religion rising; a religion in which there is good in evil—and no good without it. A religion where murder can be committed upon innocent persons without creating the stains of guilt upon the perpetrators—and where political issues can be infused with the fervor of religion. A religion which, as in the ancient days, combined excess with the powers of the state, and made all values earthbound and achievable in one's own lifetime.

These new doctrines were the more effective for being largely unstated. Christianity, with its centuries of soaring intellectualism, was tipped aside and first dozens, then hundreds, then thousands, and finally millions poured away from its ancient structure.

Today the argument that the Civil War was inevitable reflects the retroactive determinism of those who excuse every stage they admire, no matter how achieved. The American textbooks, by imbedding Brown as a hero despite his murderous methods, and hailing our civil war as a triumph for ending slavery (though all other nations ended slavery peacefully), have created a permanent rationale for terrorism and "wars of liberation" everywhere in the world.

These doctrines have moved white South Africans to the target position of white Southerners of the 1850s. Consider the deeds of the new pagans: kneecapping in Italy, bombing in Ireland, torturing in the U.S.S.R., engaging in genocide in Cambodia and shooting in France. Yet terrorists everywhere share a common bond of deep-seated hatred for all white Americans. Seldom has the irony of history come boomeranging back more accurately upon heretics. ☆

## **PART TWO**

# **REGIONAL COLOR**

**The South and Its Jews**  
*Charles Goolsby*

**1991**

*"The Jew is without doubt the most remarkable man of this world — past or present. His history is the history of our civilization and progress in this world, and our faith and hope in that which is to come. Their ideas fill the world and move the wheels of its progress."*

from "*The Scattered Nation*," a speech by Zebulon B. Vance,  
 Confederate Governor of North Carolina, U.S. Senator, 1879-1894.

In his colorful autobiography, one of the South's most distinguished Jewish sons, Bernard Baruch, recalled the emotion that gripped him, at the age of six, when he and his brother opened a mysterious trunk hidden in the attic of the Baruch home in Camden, South Carolina. An eager search yielded his father's well-worn Confederate army uniform.

Beneath the uniform was a more thrilling discovery, "a white hood and a long robe with the crimson cross on its breast — the regalia of a Knight of the Ku Klux Klan."

Anticipating the shock of many modern day readers, Baruch noted: "Today, of course the KKK is an odious symbol of bigotry and hate, reflecting its activities during the 1920s, when it acquired considerable power, particularly outside the South. I have good reason to know the character of the modern Klan since I was a target for its hatred. But to children in the Reconstruction South, the original Klan, led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest, seemed a heroic band fighting to free the South from the debaucheries of carpetbag rule. To my brother and me the thought that Father was a member of that band exalted him in our youthful eyes."

The crucible of war and occupation forged a bond among white Southerners stronger than any confessional or ethnic divergence. (Blacks have a unique and very different perception of those events, though most recognize that it was, for them, a tragedy as well as a triumph.)

Bernard Baruch's recollections of that turbulent era are within the tradition he inherited from Simon Baruch — Surgeon, Third Battalion, South Carolina Infantry. The elder Baruch saw action in the bloodiest battles of the war and wrote a treatise on bayonet wounds that was still being used by army surgeons as late as World War I.

Bernard's uncle Herman Baruch had been a Confederate cavalryman. His great-uncle Fischel Cohen was General Beauregard's telegrapher. Like their gentile countrymen, Bernard Baruch's kinsmen had gone to war to preserve a culture and heritage — a heritage in which Jews had played a notable part.

The first documented settlement of Jews in North America was at the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam in 1654. But many scholars believe that Elias Legardo, who settled in Virginia in 1621, was America's first Jewish immigrant. Sephardic Jews from Spanish territory were in South Carolina as early as 1694. Five years later, John Locke drew up South Carolina's "Fundamental Constitution" providing full and equal civil rights for "heathens, Jews, and other dissenters." Charleston's Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim synagogue, founded in 1749, is the fourth oldest congregation in the United States and its Hebrew Benevolent Society (founded in 1784) was the first of its kind on American shores.

General James Oglethorpe included Jews among the first settlers of Georgia in 1732 (Catholics however were denied entry). A Jewish congregation was established in Richmond by 1790. In 1789, a Jewish Indian trader named Abraham Mordecai established a camp on the site of what is today Montgomery, Alabama. He later built the state's first cotton gin. French authorities had barred Jewish immigration to Louisiana. But soon after Jefferson's purchase they founded a flourishing community. Jews were established in Kentucky by 1808, in Missouri by 1816, and in Arkansas by 1838.

Samuel Isaacs is listed among "the old 300" settlers that accompanied Stephen F. Austin to Texas in 1821. Isaacs held a land grant from the Spanish government. In 1836, he fought for Texas' independence along with Houston's Surgeon General, Moses Levy; cavalryman Albert Emmanuel; wounded hero David S. Kaufman (for whom Kaufman County is named); Herman Ehrenberg; and other Texas Jews. One of these, Edward Johnson, was killed with Colonel Fannin in the Goliad massacre. Another, named Wolff, died at the Alamo. Captain Levi Charles Harby resigned from the United States Navy in 1836 to aid the struggling Texas Republic. In 1863, as a Confederate naval officer, he distinguished himself in the defense of Galveston. He later commanded a fleet of gunboats on the Sabine River.

During the War Between the States, twelve hundred Jews served in Confederate forces. The best known of these, Judah P. Benjamin, held, at various times, the highest posts in the government — Attorney General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State. Though vilified in the press, he was President Davis' most trusted advisor, aptly

called "the brains of the Confederacy." As United States Senator from Louisiana, Benjamin had eloquently defended the South's position on slavery and the Constitution. He had turned down President Pierce's offer of a place on the Supreme Court to champion the South in the Senate. Unlike his co-religionist Senator David Yulee of Florida (the first Jew elected to the U.S. Senate), Benjamin was not a fire-eating secessionist. He pleaded for compromise, but, finding none, followed his native state into the Confederacy.

Southern Jews furnished the Confederacy with 23 staff officers, in addition to Surgeon General David De Leon (General De Leon went to Mexico at the war's end rather than surrender); A. C. Meyers, Quartermaster General; and Assistant Adjutant General J. Randolph Mordecai. On the battlefields from Gettysburg to Galveston, Jewish Confederates won high honors. Isaac Heymans was wounded seven times in the course of the war. Captain Jacob Valentine fell in the gallant defense of Ft. Moultrie, South Carolina. Lt. Albert Luria of North Carolina seized the colors from a fallen comrade at the battle of Seven Pines and was killed while rallying his company to the attack.

The experience of those four terrible years and the long night that followed unites Southern Jews and gentiles to this very day. One of the South's most articulate literary critics, Louis Rubin, once observed that in things Southern, "One is not dealing with an idea, or a body of knowledge, but an experience; the South *is*. And *was*." The brooding consciousness of that experience profoundly strikes foreign visitors of the region. V.S. Naipal, in his *A Turn in the South*, wondered that ordinary people in South Carolina still speak of General Sherman's savaging march "as if it were yesterday."

A sense of history comes naturally to the Jewish people. Jews raised in the traditions of their fathers share the tragic sense of man and his fate that their white Southern neighbors began to learn at Appomattox. (Black Southerners, of course, know the tragedy of the human condition better than any of us.) The gall of defeat and humiliation is a familiar cup to Jews. In this "enlightened" century, they have drunk it to the dregs. This potent brew tends to protect those who have tasted it from the hallucinatory effects of modern ideologies. Jews who know their history remember that "crusades" undertaken in the name of God (or abstract concepts of "democracy" and "liberty") usually mean terror and suffering for ordinary people. Southerners, recalling how General Sherman wielded the Almighty's "terrible swift sword" and remembering the carpetbag version of "global democracy," still retreat into what Naipal calls "a religion of the past."

More fundamental than a sense of history is the faith that marks the Southern people — Jew or Christian. Because they take their faith as seriously as life itself, neither Southern Jews nor Christians minimize the importance of confessional differences. But in contrast with the modern world that surrounds and menaces them, the people of the South, of all races and most religious faiths, reject a "God without thunder," and cling to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob.

More than any other Americans it was Southerners who articulated and established man's fundamental right to worship freely. In the South, it was the fundamentalists, especially the Baptists, who successfully disestablished the state churches.

The institution of Freemasonry — emphasizing "the Fatherhood of God" and the "brotherhood" (though not equality) of all men — played an important role in this process. Thus, when President Washington insisted that the Treaty of Tripoli include a statement that "the government of the United States of America is in no sense founded on the Christian religion....," he spoke of the language of Masonic Deism, not the militant atheism of the French Jacobins. During his celebrated visit to the Jewish synagogue at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1790, President Washington was escorted by his fellow Freemason Moses Michael Hays, Master of Newport's King David's Lodge. In a now famous letter to the congregation, Washington noted that the United States "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

It was to Washington's Masonic conception of religious tolerance that Jacob Ezekiel, father of the sculptor Sir Moses Ezekiel (Confederate veteran renowned for the Confederate soldier's monument at Arlington National Cemetery), appealed in a letter to President Tyler written in 1841. Ezekiel took issue with the President's reference to Americans as "a Christian people," and received a cordial reply thanking him for the correction.

Though Washington's example was followed by the great majority of Southerners, the South has not been without religious prejudice and incidents of persecution. The worst excesses followed the destruction of the old order and the rise of the populist demagogues. The sad history of that era is a useful warning to those who believe that majoritarian democracy and "human rights" go hand-in-hand. This period gave rise to an unworthy and hateful successor to the old Ku Klux Klan. Its anti-Semitic nadir was the shocking lynch-murder of Leo Frank, a Southern Jew falsely accused and unjustly convicted of rape in 1913.

Anti-Semitism is not unknown in the South, but it has been much

more at home in the North. Bernard Baruch recalled that "in South Carolina we never had suffered discrimination because we were Jews." But on his first day in New York City, local toughs greeted him with shouts of "kike." He noted that while he was repeatedly blackballed from New York City College fraternities, his brother was quickly and easily pledged by the best fraternity at the University of Virginia.

Anti-Semitism was an active element in the "Know Nothing" and Anti-Masonic movements that would later fuse into the Grand Old Party of Abraham Lincoln. In 1849, an anti-Semitic mob attacked a group of Jewish mourners near Long Island and prevented the congregation from conducting a funeral service. A year later, a pogrom was reported in New York City on the Jewish Day of Atonement. Local bigots, convinced that a Jewish congregation had engaged in human sacrifice, ransacked Jewish homes.

The most notorious anti-Semitic episode of the period was the work of "Unconditional Surrender" Grant. On December 17, 1862, Grant issued "General Order No. 11," expelling "the Jews as a class ...within twenty-four hours" from his theater of operations. Assistant Secretary of War Wolcott heartily approved such action against "Jews and other unprincipled traders." Without judicial warrant, trial, or any process of law, Southern Jews were driven from their homes. Those who refused or attempted to return were subject to immediate arrest and imprisonment.

Like most of his fellow Southerners, Baruch finds racial and religious hatred rooted in sinful human nature — a nature that only God's mercy can change and perfect. "It would be wonderful," wrote Baruch, "if laws could be passed which would wipe out bigotry and prejudice. But human nature is not changed so easily. The key to progress in racial and religious understanding lies in the recognition that the individual gains for his or her own attainments."

Southerners continue to demonstrate their trust in their Jewish neighbors by elevating them to leadership positions in the professions, in business, and in government. Most South Carolinians remember the late Solomon Blatt, Speaker of the House of South Carolina (longer than any other state speaker in U.S. history), as the most powerful man in the state. For more than four decades he represented the overwhelmingly gentile Barnwell County, while his co-religionist Herman Mauzursky served as mayor of Barnwell. At the other end of the Confederacy, Dallasites have given three terms on the city council to colorful local businessman Max Goldblatt, while Annette Strauss and Martin Frost continue to serve, respectively, as mayor of Dallas and U.S. Congressman of Texas' 24th District.

For more than three hundred years, Jewish men and women have enriched the life of the South and America with their attainments in every field of human endeavor. Their recognition outside the South is long overdue. A wise and benevolent Providence has placed them in our midst, to remind us that His Word is true and His promise is certain forevermore. ☆

**How Jakob Emig Fought the Yankees**  
*James Kibler***1989**

From the front porch, Jakob Emig could look across fields where his winter wheat greened nicely. An old man now, with sons gone off to war, he lived mainly in a woman's world of married daughters and daughters-in-law on farms scattered nearby. He himself lived alone, widowed now for two years, hard work during wartime finally having taken its toll on his wife's constitution already weakened by a series of illnesses. She'd borne him seven living children, and he was remembering her now on the front gallery as Old Shack lay at his feet, nose outstretched on paws and wrinkling eyes upward to his master. There would be no hunting today, though the hound eagerly waited for any sign of preparation.

Jakob was remembering back nearly forty years ago when he and his Polly first began farming these fields and built this house. It had started log-modest and been added to over the years. The old one-room cabin with fireplace large enough to stand in had eventually become the kitchen onto which he built a four-room house. When the girls came along, he'd also made shed-room additions. He and Polly had lost four babes to sudden fevers and unexplained illnesses. The Lord's will. They buried them in the hillside plot and grieved. It was to these lost little ones and to Polly, fresh and young in her homespun linen, that his mind returned mostly, of Polly and himself in the wagon going to church the first Sunday after their marriage, sitting together that day in the little sanctuary where men and women always sat apart for worship. Newlyweds had this privilege for a time, and he remembered how the congregation wished them well, out of full hearts. These were his neighbors whom he thought of now in turn. Some who had died; how the years had treated others. How they were bearing up in these evil and trying times. Remembering then the firstborn, taken from them with fever that first spring, and how Polly took it so hard it was like to kill her too, and he so low that the planting dragged on forever. But they had had to put it aside and carry on, for they were strong folk and meant to make a go. Their people before them had done the same on the same land under hardships far worse than these. Too, Providence had given them special powers and strengths that would always prevail against the forces of evil.

It was in the middle of these thoughts that he saw the first col-

umn of smoke. It rose slowly and distinctly like a dark stain on a linen-white sky. Though it was far enough distant, he knew that he must soon rise now and see to the livestock. He would need to hide it as best he could in the surrounding woods. He must also see to putting the meal and hams in sacks for burial. When the second and third columns rose to right and left of the first, he knew he must be stirring. Old Shack whimpered. There was something in his master's movements that made him anxious. Jakob's mind was far from the hunt, and he rose stiffly from the split-bottomed chair to go first to smokehouse, then to kitchen. He worked with method, efficiently and deftly, but without hurry, tying the cords stiffly with old-man's hands. The hams went into canvas bags that he had made several days ago for the purpose.

He had already dug his holes the week before on a dry hill in the proper thickets where they could be covered with leaves and brush. It was a matter of only a few hours until he had hitched Hans to the wagon and, with Shack at his heels, had buried four fine hams, three canvas-covered barrels of meal, and one of flour.

This would see him through the rest of the winter, and his boys and daughters as well. The boys, God willing, would return one day soon; their farms were not faring as well as his own, having no grown menfolk to take the proper reins. The gals ploughed well enough, but there was too much to be done, and the oldest grandson on any of the farms was ten. Yes, there would be hungrier mouths to feed than now, and a long time till harvest. God only knew what these next six months would have in store for them. He could only trust and do all in his power.

His feet made icy prints as he went about his early work. There had been a heavy frost this February morning, and by eleven it was still unmelted. The white sun's rays seemed to have no force in them; he could not feel them on his shoulders. The columns of dark smoke now rose everywhere in the pale sky. They were close. The one to the immediate left was, he knew, in the direction of his eldest son Johann's, some three miles distant. He raised a prayer for Christiana as he bridled his mules and led them from the lot. He just could not be with them all and prayed God to hold them in His hands. He had wanted to call them all together under his protecting wings but knew they were too independent and practical for that, wishing to care for the homesteads which their husbands had left in trust to them. Old Shack, the two milk cows, the three sheep, and two beees, he tethered and hid as best he could in the distant woods. He muttered a few words in a foreign tongue over them. As this was ac-

complished and he was returning home, he saw the smoke from his barn and caught a glimpse of blue men on horseback switching and swirling in his yard. It was time for him to think about himself and his own safety.

Smoke seemed to ring him. Somewhere to the distant east, the woods had caught fire. The sky was raining soot and cinders and was pitch black. The world itself seemed to be on fire, and the white sun seldom shone through the breaks of smoke. Jakob could now hear the intermittent pop and crackle of occasional musketry, and the laughs and shouts of bearded mouths. Somebody seemed to be having lots of fun; he knew it wasn't him. He would have to exercise all his strength to keep himself from defending his farmstead with the rifle that rested impotently over his mantel, but common sense and the ring of smoke taught him that such an attempt would be pointless.

He had little fear for his own safety, for he had tricks up his sleeves that even Satan-helped Yankees wouldn't believe. Theirs were the powers of darkness over which light would prevail. Their element was Satan's dark fire and they brought death, ashes, and destruction. He himself exercised powers as ancient as theirs and more fearful by a long shot. He needed neither torch nor rifle. They would just see who would come out better here.

Jakob had that reputation. Both he and his Polly practiced what the good farm folk of the area called *using*, or *Brauchen* in the old German tongue of their ancestors. He was known far and wide for his wizardry in a community in which *users* were numerous and properly respected. Folks even came from far off to seek his help. Among *users*, he truly had no equal. All acknowledged that he was in a class by himself, and he himself knew it. Were it not for his gentle nature and trustworthiness, he would have been universally feared. His own recognition of his powers, however, went almost as far as pride, which Jakob was always heedful of having to guard against. It was his one real weakness, and he knew that too. Just where these mysterious strengths came from, he himself did not comprehend. He only knew he had them; and as a special gift, he had learned early that he must take care to practice them humbly, sparingly, and only for the good. That they must be practiced so, must have been a requirement for their potency, for the one time that he sought to do otherwise, he failed and failed miserably to his own considerable physical discomfort. (But that is another story.)

This time, and in these circumstances, he knew he would not fail. Hell was flaming around him, and Satan's emissaries were brandish-

ing torch and sword. He eased closer to see their devilish work, to the orchard within a hundred paces of his burning barn. Near him the blue men were having carnival in the glare of the fire, emptying his smokehouse. One soldier was stringing ropes of sausages around his neck like a necklace of pearls. Another wore a dead chicken on his head like a great feather bonnet. What they could not carry off, they were intent on destroying. Jakob looked on sadly and his only solace was that Polly was not here to see what was happening to the fruits of many years of careful planning, struggle, and hard work. But still Jakob was sure he would yet have the last word, and properly so. He knew his strength, if only he managed to practice it humbly, with fitting restraint, and without anger.

Before he could put his plan in motion, however, he felt a cold barrel pressed to the small of his back and heard the sinister double clicks of a hammer readying for fire. He had been captivated by the Yankees, sure as shootin', and was being marched into his own yard a prisoner. Where was his gold? He had no gold. Where was his silver? He had no silver. Where were his shiny jewels and valuables? He had none. "We will just see about that for ourselves," they assured, "and if you are lying, you will surely die."

His house was already being ransacked from garret to cellar. He saw his old faithful rifle being carried away as booty. Polly's quilts were being strung on horses for saddle blankets and the rest were being torn, sabred, and trampled. Every chest had been brought into the yard and knocked apart. The furniture was likewise brought outside and made the targets for both rifle and sword, then smashed and ridden over by the horses. He looked on with stunned amazement and sullen disbelief.

They had not found gold, they said. Where was it? They would shoot him if he did not tell them where he had hidden it. They knew he lied, they said; but he did not. Soon, soon, now, he would have to use his power against them. If only he could remain cautious and humble so as not to anger the Almighty.

They took him to his barnyard, near his burning barn, and into his poultry lot. Here, every creature had been decapitated and those not taken away for camp dinner were still strewn about in twitching and headless state. His old peacock, his wife's fondest pet, lay shot through the head near its favorite perch. A sad sight, but he had always been a proud strutter. A soldier had been annoyed by his pride and loud cry as if mocking the Great Blue Army.

Jakob looked on patiently. No, he did not lie about the gold; so they placed him with his back against the poultry house and began

to shoot musket balls about his head to force him to tell them where it was. A Minie ball came close to his left ear. Its sound was like the buzz of a big green fly or an enormous mosquito. Splinters from the fractured wood brushed his cheek. He could not tell them where nonexistent gold was hidden, so they were about to kill him. For his own self, it did not matter overmuch; but there were his children and grandchildren who would need his help in the lean months ahead. Their farms were at this moment, he knew, being laid waste in the same way as his own, as truly they were. The ring of fire around him was from the lands of his closest kin.

The right ear now, pop and buzz, and the next ball would likely take his life. As he watched the blue man with the red beard pull trigger and the rifle flash its long orange streak, he lined the ball as it issued from the barrel, as it aimed and sped for his forehead, slowed it, and struggled with it to twist it out of its path so that when it resumed its velocity, it went flying at a 45-degree angle into a great black iron washpot. There it spun round and round making a tinny sound, till it stopped silent. The blue men were amazed. One walked to the pot and picked up the bullet. Jakob stood calm. He served a second, third, fourth, and fifth bullet in the same way. Each time the ball went "phling" into the giant washpot. Several different men tried with different muskets, but each time, the bullets went "phling" into the giant washpot. By now, there were many blue men gathered. The thirteenth bullet clanged and spun "phling" into the pot and was retrieved in the shape of a tiny silver cross. This ended the experiment at once. Most of the men began to fear. However, the first soldier, the loud and red-bearded man who had been drinking, was angered rather than frightened.

He fumbled at his left side and fixed his bayonet, then made to lunge at the old man. As Jakob lined the bayonet which was aimed at his heart he fought with it with his eyes and froze its motion within a foot of him. The red-bearded soldier writhed and twisted behind the bayonet frozen in mid-air, trying to move it, then tried to free himself from it, but found that his skin was stuck, as if to ice. He thrashed about in all manner of grotesque motions, comic to behold if they had not been so desperately performed. It was at this moment that he of the red beard looked Jakob in his steely gray eyes. Jakob's eyes calmed him, transfixed him as on the point of a bayonet, and froze him in mid-struggle. There stood Red-Beard, with glazed eyes fixed on Jakob, one foot lifted from the ground in the motion of plunging forward, his hands frozen to the instrument. To Jakob, he looked for the world like Old Shack on his most famous point when a

larger than usual covey of partridges would fly into view.

It was then that the other blue men began to fear in earnest. A few had heard that such wizards existed in this strange backwater land through which they passed. In their march of burning, they had just yesterday seen three tall gaunt sisters dressed in flowing black garments come onto the porch of an old farmhouse near by, chanting and wailing in an unknown tongue. These weird sisters had caused shivers, and the blue men passed them in quiet, sparing their house from their usual pillage and burning out of an unreasoned fear. What, then, were they encountering here? Was it more of the same wizardry and craft? Thoughts of gold and silver vanished.

Meanwhile, Jakob stood silent and calm in the strength of his powers. He no longer spoke. He was no longer spoken to. As he moved for the first time, taking a step to the side of the frozen bayonet aimed at his chest, the semicircle of blue men shrank back from him. They opened outward to let his gaunt form pass. Jakob then walked the short distance to his house, gazed at by all, but molested by none.

The home, now having been completely plundered of booty, was about to be burned. As Jakob approached, a Black Beard on a roan horse accosted him with sword uplifted. Jakob fought with his eyes and froze both man and beast, the man with sword uplifted and eyes glazed. The same he did with two men on foot, struggling with their eyes, and freezing them in mid-stride.

There was another Red-Beard with torch in hand about to fire the dimity curtains of the front parlor window. He looked at Jakob as he was about to apply the torch and caught his calm steely-gray eyes. Jakob struggled with the Red-Beard's frantic eyes in which the fires from the torch reflected, and froze the man in calmness. The torch fire melted into water which froze as a long icicle that dripped from the soldier's outstretched hand. (In after years, the figure would have reminded you of the frozen iron statue of a cold gray lady, torch in hand, in the great harbor of the Northmen.)

These scenes were witnessed by more than a few, who now shrank back from our wizard, who went about his business calmly and serenely. The woods had caught fire from the burning barn and smokehouse. These threatened with their sparks the very house itself. So Jakob, now given wide berth, especially since the presence of the five frozen statuemen attested quite graphically and persuasively to his powers, was able to move undisturbed. He slowly circled his and Polly's dwelling, once, twice, three times while *using* with the incantation long taught by his ancestors. The blue men watched his every move and looked on in as-

tonishment akin to horror as Jakob went about his ritual. The three weird sisters of yesterday could not hold a candle to this, though the pair of events had the result of reinforcing one another in potency in the excited brains of the strangers. Like most bullies, these men were cowards and with danger to themselves now a possibility for the first time, they hastened away, some leaving chickens roasting on spits, some in the middle of looting the springhouse.

The booty wagons on which the goods from his house had been piled now hastened to pull out. With a glance of his eye, he locked their wheels, as if an iron bar had been thrust into them. The men on them fell forward with a jolt, quickly dismounted, cut loose their horses, and fled afoot. The wagons sat quiet in the lane with a golden sheen of enchantment spread over them like one of Polly's best yellow tulip quilts.

Jakob was soon again alone with five statues, but not for long. As was usually the case during the great march of destruction, the conquerors came in waves. It was not long until another, bigger band of blue soldiers, this time headed by General Judson Kilpatrick himself, rode into Jakob's yard.

Jakob had charmed the fire so that it burned to the magic circle, and it did not cross this line. The charred and smoking weeds ran up to the unburned grass to form a perfect ring. Further, no man but Jakob was able to enter it. His house was thus saved; his livestock and goods were secure in the charmed woods where no foot could enter, and frankly he was a bit weary from all the commotion. Too, *using* exhausts a body so. And this new red-bearded one on the great black horse Jakob correctly knew to be Satan himself; the smell of Lucifer matches and burning sulphur was about him; and Jakob had sense enough to know that even *using* powers had their limits. His eyes could not struggle with Satan's to extinguish their myriad fires, and one could not look into the doors to the Red-Beard's burning abyss without being affected somehow for the worse, contaminated in some sort of central way of spoiling and wounding. The Scriptures always had taught him to leave evil alone, to give it distance. So Jakob thus rightly felt it best to avoid this man named Kilpatrick and his blood-red-bearded twin brother Sherman, himself seen in the wizard's inner eye as he skulked somewhere in the nearby shadowed woods of burning Fairfield. Kilpatrick and his men could do no more damage to him after all, and Jakob must be careful not to overstep the bounds into pride in his powers. So he, with a wink of his left steely-gray eye, the one with the yellow flecks in it, turned himself into a great log by the garden palings. Here he

could witness the conclusion of the little drama in which he had up to now been the central actor.

There, as a sturdy and solid oak log, he was feeling comfortable, smug, and superior. You might say he was even coming close to pride and vanity, so to chasten him, the Almighty (felt Jakob) brought him low by having Judson Kilpatrick sit on him to eat his midday meal while he puzzled over the deserted, frozen, and well filled wagons and the five blue statues that used to be his men.

Long years since, when Jakob, now grown to a truly venerable age and an honored patriarch in the land, would tell from his spot in the chimney corner the tale of this day to the thrill and hushed amazement of his legion of great-grandchildren, he would recall that of all the losses he had suffered, and of all the troubles and trials of the day, the one thing that stung him most was having Satan's back-side imprinted on him. The Almighty caused it to happen, however (he was quick to tell the children), out of an infinite wisdom not to be questioned. Jakob had saved his meat, his hearth and home, but Satan had shown an awesome power before which he could never more be either too proud or vain. It was truly a lesson worth the learning on a par with how to use power aright—even if he had to be pressed by Satan's backside to fathom it. ☆

**My Year With Herman Talmadge**  
*Mark Royden Winchell***1988**

I should have spent the summer of 1973 reading the canon of English literature (from Beowulf to Virginia Woolf, as Richard Armour put it). After all, I was entering the Ph.D. program at Vanderbilt and would eventually be expected to stand a comprehensive oral exam rumored to be only slightly less rigorous than Chinese water torture. But that was the summer of the televised Watergate hearings. So Jane Austen and Alexander Pope took a back seat to John Wesley Dean III and H. R. "Bob" Haldeman.

It may have been a bad season for the Nixon administration and even for the American republic, but I relished the courtroom drama and discovered a new pantheon of culture heroes. On my way to Dixie, I saw Watergate as something of a renaissance for Southern politics and Southern rhetoric. There were four Southerners on that seven-man committee, and two were vintage products of the Old South. The senators had scarcely completed their opening statements when a friend of mine from Shaker Heights, Ohio, said, "God, I wish Huey Long were still alive."

Alas, Huey had long since been dispatched to that great Share the Wealth Club in the Sky, but the heir of one of his most colorful political allies was sitting on the Watergate Committee. Herman Talmadge—"Young Hummon," son of the legendary Georgia populist Gene Talmadge—may not have received as much press as committee chairman Sam Ervin, but knowledgeable observers (including the committee's most combative witness, John Ehrlichman) rated him the most effective interrogator of the bunch.

Without keeping track of his career after that Watergate summer, I knew in a general way that the late 1970s had been a long slide downhill for Herman Talmadge. But that fact meant little to me in January 1986 when I stopped in one afternoon to see my department head, Bill Koon, a free-lance editor with Peachtree Publishers of Atlanta. It seemed that Peachtree had just signed Talmadge to tell his life story. Would I be interested in being his collaborator? There were many reasons to decline. I had never done this sort of book before. I was unsure how a living Southern legend would react to working with an Ohio-born academic. And I was convinced that anything produced by literary collaboration would resemble the aphoristic camel—a horse designed by a committee. So, with characteristic discretion and prudence, I said, "When do we start?"

The only hurdle was a meeting with the former senator.

On the Wednesday before spring break, Peachtree editor Chuck Perry, Bill Koon and I left Atlanta and headed down what used to be known as the Jonesboro Road toward Lake Talmadge in Hampton, Georgia. It was roughly the same route that General Sherman had taken during an earlier invasion.

An expense account breakfast from the Waffle House under our belts, we arrived about fifteen minutes early on the front doorstep of the suburban home of Herman Talmadge and his wife, Lynda. The door was open but no one seemed to be home. Then Chuck remembered that the Talmadges liked to take morning walks. A few minutes later we noticed a couple coming down the street.

The man whom I had seen countless times on television was wearing a jogging suit and had a wad of tobacco in his cheek. Feeling like an overdressed city slicker in my three-piece suit, I watched with sinking heart as he scrutinized my Ohio license plates and deposited a stream of tobacco juice on the ground. With a smile, he stuck out his hand and said, "I'm Herman Talmadge."

Our initial conversation—and all our subsequent interviews—took place in the Senator's den, a room presided over by an oil painting of Eugene Talmadge. In one corner of the room, Old Gene's red galluses are framed and hanging on the wall.

Herman told some vintage political anecdotes and tried to get a sense of whether I wanted to help him tell his story or had my own hidden agenda. I had read enough about his father to hold up my end of the conversation and must have seemed open-minded enough to pass inspection.

When the moment of truth arrived, Chuck said, "The reason we're down here is for you to look Mark over and see if you can work with him." Herman took his cigar out of his mouth, fixed me in his gaze, and said. "He looks all right to me." To paraphrase Humphrey Bogart, it was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Over the next nine months, I made six overnight trips to Hampton and conducted some valuable taped interviews with the Senator. This required some adjustment in my own habits, since I'm a night owl and Herman regularly beats the chickens up each morning. During the summer months that meant going to bed while it was still light out and awaking when it was dark.

When I would get up to go to the bathroom in what I thought was the middle of the night, Herman would be up cooking breakfast and waiting for the morning paper. Once when classes kept me at Clemson until late afternoon, I didn't arrive at Lake Talmadge until 8 p.m.

I was greeted by a note on the door that said: "Mark, we've gone to bed. There's food in the refrigerator. Make yourself at home. See you in the morning." It was signed "Herman and Lynda."

The Talmadges do not have an unlisted phone number, and they received quite a few calls during the time I spent with them. Sometimes the caller would be an old friend or family member. But, just as often, it was some ordinary citizen who needed help in dealing with the government or just wanted a sympathetic ear to listen to his troubles. Not surprisingly, many of these were farmers.

When he last ran for public office seven years ago, Herman's opponents accused him of being out of touch with the people. If they had ever spent a night at his house, they might have thought differently.

Even the press still sought Herman's opinion on public matters. One night upon returning from West Georgia College, where he spoke extemporaneously about the presidents he had known, he received word that the son of an old political crony had taken his own life. A reporter had called for a statement. Rather than resenting this invasion of his privacy, Herman returned the reporter's call before going to bed.

Fortunately, there were light moments, as well. I'll never forget arriving at Lake Talmadge on the afternoon that C-SPAN began live telecasts from the floor of the U. S. Senate. Herman had opposed televising the Senate because he knew what showboats some of his colleagues could be. I'm sure that nothing he saw on the screen that day caused him to reconsider his position.

After watching for awhile, he turned down the sound so we could discuss the chapter we were currently working on. But when William Proxmire of Wisconsin took the floor, Herman grabbed the remote control and turned the sound back up. "Come on," he laughed, "let's hear what that adroit demagogue has to say."

Whether the product of our labors is good, bad, or indifferent, I enjoyed the year I spent working with Herman Talmadge and feel that the sort of book we wrote will be of increasing value in the years to come. As electronic communication replaces the written word in the conduct of our public life, historians will begin to lose the permanent record of papers and letters that they have always used in reconstructing the past.

If we are moving into a post-Gutenberg era, the oral tradition will once again become of central importance in remembering who we are. (T. Harry Williams makes this point in the introduction to his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Huey Long.) My conversations with Herman Talmadge belong to that oral tradition. They are now a

part of public record.

Although I have come to love grits and have even gotten South Carolina license tags for my car, I doubt that I will ever become a Southern politician. But perhaps his book has started me down the road to becoming a Southern writer. For over a year now an excerpt from the official *History of Southern Literature* has adorned the bulletin board next to my office door. It is a passage from Louise Y. Gossett's essay on Flannery O'Connor. "O'Connor," Gossett writes, "made rural central Georgia her place as forcefully as Faulkner and Welty made Mississippi theirs. She once acknowledged the intensity of her locale by saying that even if she were to write about characters as exotic to her as the Japanese, they would all sound like Herman Talmadge." ☆

*Note: This article originally appeared in Clemson World magazine and is reprinted with permission.*

**Virginia's "Lost Counties"***Holmes Alexander***1984**

You can stand on the station platform at Harpers Ferry and see three States, two battlefields, two rivers and a panorama of natural scenery which the Kiwanis Club calls "the Little Switzerland of America" and which Thomas Jefferson said was "one of the most stupendous scenes in nature...worth a voyage across the Atlantic."

Where the chasm yawns beneath and Shenandoah flows into Potomac, you behold the gigantic tumult of nature's mighty forces meeting her immovable objects. Where the valley flattens out beyond, you look upon a tranquility of meadow and stream which the Indians named Sherundo—"clear-eyed daughter of the stars."

The sermon in stone that Mr. Jefferson read "of a war between rivers and mountains that must have shaken the earth itself to its core" is yet legible. With the third President's imagination you can picture, as did he, an inland ocean hurling its breakers against the peaks of the Blue Ridge until at last that mammoth bulwark was rent from summit to base, its fragments scattered as huge boulders the length and breadth of the valley, the waters themselves tumbling toward the Atlantic.

Or, lacking Mr. Jefferson's vision, you may read other writings on the wall of rock before you. That black hole gouged in the mountain's side you will recognize as the railroad tunnel which connects Washington with Ohio and the West. Symbolically, it is more than a tunnel; rather, a gaping wound still seeming to bleed of smoke and soot, festering the soil wherein it was cut. For, as any native can inform you, not the Union armies, but the B.&O. Railroad conquered the land on which you stand.

"The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad," wrote Governor Letcher, of war-ravaged Virginia, "has been a positive nuisance to this State...it must be abated."

Acting on this suggestion Stonewall Jackson did his share of abating by tearing up bridges and track faster than the workmen could mend them (because, local legend insists, the trains disturbed his soldiers' sleep). But in '63, when the trans-Appalachian counties seceded to form the independent State of West Virginia, the railroad lobbyists at Washington arranged that a cargo of soldiers and carpetbaggers be shipped into Charles Town for the purpose of preserving the Shenandoah water gap to the Union. At a plebiscite to represent several thousand souls only 172 votes went into the ballot boxes and

from these the will of the people was judged to be for annexation.

In '67 and again in '71 Virginia sued for the return of her lost provinces, but the Reconstruction Congress, and later the Supreme Court, gave sanction to the farcical plebiscite of '63.

It is no longer fashionable, of course, to be sentimental about the South. Still these Shenandoah counties of Berkeley and Jefferson pose a most melancholy case. They are the waifs of the Confederacy—the Alsace-Lorraine of the South. And if such songs as the "Old Kentucky Home" deserve a tear, certainly these lost provinces are worth, at least, a lump in the throat. It is one thing to have gone down fighting off an invader; something else to have been kidnapped and taken alive. It is proud memory for a community to boast itself an unreconstructed rebel, flaunting its Stars and Bars; but it is ironic and mournful for a constituency to have supplied these same Stars and Bars with more troops than any section of the South, and yet have its mail postmarked West Virginia. But just that happened here.

When Robert E. Lee called this district "the granary of the South," he referred, one must conjecture, not only to its teeming fields and bending orchards — capable, by his estimation, of feeding 40,000 warriors — but also to its incredible wealth of manpower.

With her ten companies of regulars and her hosts of volunteers, Jefferson led all the Southern counties. With twenty-seven battle-fields within her cramped borders, she seemed to offer herself as the testing ground of her cause. And it was ever thus. The first body of men to join General Washington came from Morang's Spring; four companies and four generals followed them into the Continental Army. During World War I, Charles Town, from a total population of 4,000 sent 500 men to the colors.

Yet with all this array of martial facts, it is singular and significant that the glory of war never dwelt in this delta between the Potomac and the Shenandoah. A valley of warriors, it is also a vale of sadness. If battles were fought, most of them were sanguinary tragedies to the home force.

By the nineteenth century, General Lee marched through Pack Horse Ford, at Shepherdstown, to and from the horrors of Sharpsburg. In the eighteenth century, General Braddock crossed the same shallows on his way to the most ghastly defeat of the French and Indian wars, a campaign in which George Washington was captured and compelled to sign articles of surrender wherein he ignominiously admitted himself guilty of the assassination of a French official.

And many generations before white men came, a prodigious battle at this same location left the earth strewn with skulls of Delaware

and Catawba braves. At Swearingen Spring the victorious Catawbas buried alive a rival chieftain, and superstition still persists that the spurts of the water come from his beating heart. Could anything more exactly symbolize this spirit which seems to brood over the Shenandoah counties?

The tourist, crossing from Maryland for a trip through the valley, will pause on West Virginia soil only long enough to recall that John Brown was captured at Harpers Ferry, tried, convicted and hanged at Charles Town. He will not stand on the heights at Sheperdstown and view the site from which Horatio Gates cried "By God! She moves," as James Rumsey piloted America's first steamboat upstream more than twenty years before Robert Fulton chugged up the Hudson. He will not visit the masonic caves at Charles Town up the side of which George Washington climbed and carved his name. He will not ask his way to Braddock's Well or Washington's Tree or the Old Ronemus Graveyard or the ruins of St. George's Chapel, where Washington worshipped and the sheet roof of which was melted to mould bullets against the Yankee invaders. Moreover, if the tourist be someone seeking a picturesque or historic estate upon which to settle, he will be no wiser. For he will drive along roads which lead past the ancestral manors of Washingtons and Lees and Gateses and Kennedys—Claymont Court, Harewood, Traveler's Rest, Mordington—all waiting only the nod of a purchase. But the only thing more difficult than selling a swamp in Florida is selling a genuine landmark in West Virginia. Six or eight miles along the road at Berryville the land marts do thriving business with prosperous Northerners, but such townships as Charles Town, Harpers Ferry, Martinsburg and Sheperdstown only wave immigrants a hail and farewell.

Be that as it may, it would seem difficult to name a region in the South more rich in legend and lore. For many generations preserved by the Indians as a happy hunting ground, the upper valley lay behind its sheltering mountains unexplored by the colonists.

It was more than two centuries after Columbus when the stalwart Governor Spotswood and twelve companions pushed to the summit at Swift Run Gap and "drank King George's health and all the royal family's" —for which consideration his Majesty sent Spotswood a baronetcy and a golden horseshoe studded with diamonds. Thus was founded the proud order of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe.

Three decades later another expedition attempted the hazardous journey, a party led this time by Lord Fairfax, whose young surveyor, George Washington, was so enthralled that he staked out large claims for himself and induced his two younger brothers, Charles

and Samuel, to do likewise. Together George and Samuel built Harewood, Charles built Mordington and, being also a surveyor, laid out a village which he named for himself, Charles Town. Still later came Bushrod Washington to establish Claymont Court, a veritable Versailles with enclosed courts, terraced gardens and a driveway that still meanders two miles through a virgin forest of oaks. George unexpectedly became heir to Mount Vernon, but other Washingtons poured into what is now Jefferson County, until by '61 it was said a roll call of Jackson's Stonewall Brigade read like the Washington family tree.

Soon Jefferson County ceased to be a pioneer region and became a highly civilized squirearchy, known on both sides of the Atlantic as a sanctuary of culture and taste. How this came to pass despite the absence of either cities or universities requires some explanation. There was, first, the matter of agriculture. Jefferson County contained no big plantations. As a consequence, the divergence of wealth between planter and poor white did not exist. Like the city-states of ancient Greece, this province became a one-level social system, bulwarked against immigration by its mountains, safeguarded against proletarianists by slave labor and against economic disasters by the fact that most of its produce was of stable value.

When the fluctuating prices of cotton and tobacco wrought debt and havoc to the far-South, the Shenandoah county continued to thrive. You could not eat cotton and tobacco, but with grain and vegetables in your fields, fruits in your orchards, bluegrass in your pastures, there was little to fear.

Large library collections, such as existed at Cassilis and Claymont Court, supplied the intellectual stimulus, just as proximity to Washington maintained an interest in national affairs. Moreover, the native resource of limestone made for a permanent and classical style of architecture. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, the community had come into the flower of its prime and had begun to gather the moss of its traditions. Mr. Jefferson's enthusiasm did much to promote appreciation of the natural beauties; the Washington homesteads gave it the aristocratic glamour of an almost sacred name, and it was a great day when James Madison rode into Harewood to marry Dolly Todd at the home of her sister, Mrs. George Steptoe Washington.

By mid-century Charles Town boasted a European reputation as a literary colony and as a Mecca of intellectual hospitality. Cassilis, the home of Andrew Kennedy, became a perpetual salon for his brother, author of the best-selling "Swallow Barn" and "Horseshoe

Robinson," who came to live there with a retinue of followers which included his young protege, Edgar Allan Poe, and his old friend, Washington Irving, who was seeking material for his monumental "Life of the First President." And the great Mr. Thackeray, who was on his way westward to write a proposed novel called *The Californians*, stopped off at Cassillis and went no further. Instead of *The Californians* he wrote *The Virginians*. Shortly afterward, the deposed Prince Louis-Philippe and his brothers took up a highly wined-and-dined refuge at Harewood; and some years later Frank Stockton, prospering under the fame of his *The Lady or The Tiger*, sought somewhere to repose as a literary patriarch and bought Claymont Court, where he carried on its traditions until his death.

By this time, though, the golden days had passed. The War Between the States accounted for that. Both armies crossed and recrossed the fields, trampling down crops, carrying off horses, family silver and slaves. It is still told in Charles Town that by the middle of the war only one grown man remained to be seen on the streets. He was a certain Mr. Washington, a cripple with a hunched back, but one morning his home was noticed to be shuttered and closed — not to be reopened until "Cousin John" (so known to nearly every white person in town) rode back in his gray uniform after Appomattox.

To write in praise, or even in justice, of Jefferson County is necessarily to use the past tense. To be sure, it leads all West Virginia counties in the production of grain and blooded livestock; to be sure, some enterprising speculators established a racetrack there. But such evidence of prosperity and sophistication seems only a mockery to the memory of the days when they killed the fatted calves at Claymont to feast the Marquis de LaFayette and when honest Sam Washington used to boast that he had five wives and the fastest pack of fox hounds in America.

A farewell, indeed, to those faded glories. Claymont Court, which might rival Mount Vernon, Monticello and Arlington as a showplace, became a derelict of nailed-up windows, lost in a sea of uncut lawns and overgrown gardens. Twice in recent years I have gone there and prowled for hours without seeing anyone except a bent old Negro who hoes potatoes down behind the great stable and coach house, themselves the size of an ordinary suburban home.

Harewood remains inhabited by farmer folk who are mildly surprised when you show enough interest to pause for a look at the stones which George Washington possibly laid with his own hands. The total lack of commercialism in connection with these historical legacies is at once a charm and a discouragement to the tourist. No

agency offers to show him around, no sign points the way to these estates, and you may travel without hope or fear of being sold a souvenir. Someone may, on the other hand, actually give you a trophy or two.

And everywhere about you there exists the spirit of melancholy, this proud resentment of an ironic fate which, no doubt, still lives in the deathless heart of that buried Delaware chieftain.

Long ago the wheels of progress and the clock of time ceased to move forward. The young men went to the cities to seek fortunes; the girls married across the mountains and the rivers. The last generation, you feel, who shared the old vision and glory were those fortunate enough to have been born before the annexation, the ones who were eligible for tombstones which read "Born: Charles Town, Virginia." And those words, you are sure, become the proudest of epitaphs. ☆

**Southern Nationalism***Robert Whitaker***1982**

*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* informs us that a "nation" is: "1. An aggregation of people organized under a single government. 2. A federation of tribes, esp. one composed of North American Indians." By this definition, there was never an Irish nation until London created it by Act of Parliament in December of 1922. There was never a Polish nation until it was created by the Versailles Treaty in 1919. By this definition, the Czarist "Prison of Nations"—a term equally appropriate for the USSR—was, in fact, the only true nation. The Czar's "aggregation of peoples" was "organized under a single government," and therefore the only true nation was the one ruled from Moscow. According to the American Heritage Dictionary the Poles, Ukrainians, Finns, Estonians, and all the rest were anti-nationalist, because they opposed the "aggregation" imposed by the Czar.

Fortunately, other dictionary publishers do not seem to share the American Heritage Publishing Company's apparent conviction that a strong marketing strategy is an acceptable substitute for familiarity with the language being defined. The more conservative Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* defines a nation as, "a stable community of people with a territory, history, and language in common." Inevitably, its second definition is "people united under a single government; country." Therefore, the Czar could indeed have ruled "a prison of nations." But the second definition insists that "the prison of nations" was itself a legitimate nation.

A nation is nothing if not a living continuum of human beings, while the state is only a form of political organization. To define a nation as both is precisely equivalent to declaring a "human being" to be "1. an individual living being of the species *homo sapiens*. 2. a citizen." In other words, Imperial Russia was a nation only if Caligula's horse was a human being after being granted Roman citizenship.

**WHAT NATIONALISM IS NOT**

The state cannot create a nation, any more than it can create any other form of life. It can, however, mold or even destroy the life of an individual or of a nation. To save his character or his life, the individual emigrates. For the nation which fears for its character or its existence—for a living culture, almost synonymous terms—separatism is the exact equivalent of personal emigration. To the state which threatens life, there can be no question of loyalty.

Those who espouse "the melting pot" as the purpose of the United States have made it their announced intention to destroy every vestige of cultural and ethnic diversity in this country, which, of course, includes the Southern nation as a primary target. I will gladly soften or retract this statement if anyone can give me any other plausible explanation of the term "melting pot." In deciding whether the Southern nation must pursue a course of political separation, a key concern is whether the United States of America is inevitably an instrument of the melting pot.

The United States of America was founded by men who recognized that a "state" was not—just as it is not today—merely a component of a larger organization. By its very name, it rejects the melting pot label. Those who conclude that "E Pluribus Unum" means that the "unum" requires the end of pluralism reveal an ignorance of the Latin language even more profound than my own. If the Southern nation must pursue separatism in order to survive, it can only be because those who have gained control of the political organization of which the South is a part cannot be dissuaded from using that political organization in direct violation of the guarantees embodied in its very name.

Nationalism is not a creature of the state. It is therefore not the product either of political separatism or of political union. A second point is that, while it is particular, nationalism is also not merely the product of particularisms. The Southern nation, the Scottish nation, the Polish nation, and other living nations are integral parts of the totality, and the totality is Western Civilization. An enemy of the whole is an enemy of its parts. We are familiar with those who have sought to use political units to dissolve nations. The histories of Ireland and Poland chronicle the battles of those nations to survive concentrated attempts by successive governments to distort their national character. Today, however, nationalist movements are being used by those who seek to destroy the cultural whole. The presence of Marxists inside European separatist movements is a clear indication that those movements do not understand the nation as a whole. To this extent, they are both particularist and separatist, but they are not nationalist.

### NATIONALISM VS. CLASSISM

True nationalism has consistently opposed Leninism, Marxism, and Legitimacy. For the nations, these are merely alternative prisons. In the nineteenth century, nationalism and class-based revolutionary agitation were generally allied movements. In the twentieth

century, nationalism is viewed as the enemy of class-based revolution. To the historian who cannot distinguish between a state and a nation, it appears that nationalism has been the tool of each side. In fact, Metternich and Lenin were enemies of diversity, so diversity has fought each in its time of ascendancy. Metternich and Karl Marx saw the world from opposite poles of a continuum, but the continuum was the same: classism. Since Metternich's world was divided between nobles and peasants, the Treaty of Vienna divided Europe from 1814 to 1918 on the basis of "Legitimacy." Political units were apportioned according to the "legitimate" rights of their rulers. Whether the population parcelled out was Magyar or Celtic made no difference whatsoever. In the ensuing century, therefore, the European nationalist struggled against the artificial—and non-Western—concept of an Erastian nation. In these terms, Marxism was merely a Tweedle Dum reaction to the Legitimist Tweedle Dee. It made no difference that it was now in the name of peasant rather than noble that the world was to be parcelled. It is significant that the Southern nation has consistently maintained its rejection of both forms of classism.

### SOUTHERN NATIONALISM

Southern nationalism is incomprehensible to the academic bureaucrat, and intractable to the anti-Western ideologue. In the late nineteenth century, rule by the Southern Bourbons came to—historically speaking—an abrupt end as they attempted to use Southern nationalism as a vehicle for classism. By contrast, Henry Cabot Lodge's 1952 defeat by John Kennedy in Massachusetts ushered in an instant replacement of one ruling family by another. The Southern writer who fancies himself an elitist finds his home in New York, not in Mississippi.

But the same "rednecks" who toss out their self-styled "bettters" are equally impervious to the appeals of Tweedle Dum. The moment a political "friend of the working man" becomes a "champion of the International working class," his political bridges collapse behind him, and he must find an appointment to the board of the TVA from a national officeholder who built his political career on the support of the more tractable Northern masses.

Southern wisdom has shown an astonishing ability to remain true to both the Southern and Western culture, while rejecting those who seek to use those loyalties for their own purposes. Anticlericalism is an integral part of the South, and the South is deeply religious. The idea that there is a natural aristocracy of men is obvious to our people, for as long as they remain our people, and they recognize no

man's right to rule. However contradictory these attitudes appear to the academic bureaucracy, they represent an appallingly consistent whole in the eyes of the anti-Western ideologue, be he Marxist, capitalist, or some species of Legitimist. To those who seek to destroy—or, to use a synonym, to "reconstitute"—Western Civilization, the Southern nation is an enemy, because an integral part of that nation is an understanding of what it is trying to preserve. In a world defined by the academic bureaucrats and guided by competing ideologues, the Southern nation can only be regarded either as a rock that must be blasted or a jewel beyond price.

Our search for an ideological homeland is therefore sincere, erratic, and hopeless. As individuals, we join and we rationalize. Conservatives offer us principles based upon religion and politics, as well as economics based upon freedom. But when the religion becomes theocratic, the freedom doctrinaire and rootless, and the economics classist, we are once again disillusioned. Liberals offer us a sense of social justice. But we have come to realize it as a justice not based on wisdom. Without wisdom, the community degenerates into a community of all mankind, which will exist only when all mankind is taught to admire the liberals' books. The inevitable result has been that we have been able to serve every ideological outlook but our own, and every regional interest except that of the South.

### NATIONALISM AND IDEOLOGY

In fact, both liberalism and conservatism are far more particularist, far more divisive, than is true nationalism. The true prison of nations is ideology. Several thousand competing ideologies, each of them claiming to be universal, begin by demanding that their adherents ignore the obvious fact that they have loyalties, prejudices, wisdom, and tastes which spring from the cultural background in which they are reared. The thoroughly Western pursuit of objective knowledge about the physical universe has been warped into the endless number of "universalist" ideologies, each calling for a world organized in a laboratory vacuum, free from the divisive dust of human prejudice. A vacuum may be an excellent place for testing partial observations, but when an experimental ideology begins to divide all aspects of life into "preferences"—which agree with the ideology—and forbidden "prejudices"—which do not, it has indeed evacuated the atmosphere in which intellectual life, both individual and cultural, can breathe. Unlike ideological provincialism, nationalism asks for no vacuum. A true nationalist is not required to renounce political principle or even ideology. He may seek to guide his nation along

the lines of his ideology, but he is willing to accept its decision as to its direction. It is the ideological state, not the nationalist state, which has stamped out all political dissent.

### STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The United States Senate is composed of Republicans, Democrats, and one Southerner, Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr. Byrd always sits with the Majority. He (as opposed to the Republicans) has his full share of Chairmanships, and a full measure of influence in making policy. In like manner, the twenty-two senators from the Old Confederacy would, if they thought of themselves as Southerners first, always be part of the Majority. But the Southern nation does not send Southerners to Washington. It sends Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, but no Southerners.

This categorical statement is not entirely fair. Outside the office, inside their minds, they are Southerners. In Congress, they represent their districts or states, which are located in the South. It is no part of a politician's duty to represent an entity which, however real its existence, insists on remaining politically anonymous.

Without the South, Washington would be fully provided with liberals, and conservatives. To those who believe that the left-right continuum is sufficient for national policy, the Nation South would seem to have no role to play. But for those of us who think our nation offers a necessary and complementary perspective, one which transcends ideology, the political anonymity of the Southern nation represents a tragic loss to the Union and to Western Civilization.

We have a national wisdom which could confound the destructive ideologues and protect ourselves and the civilization of which we are a part. We are the largest natural nation on earth. If the Southern Congressmen and Senators voted each two years to assure themselves a place in the Congressional Majority, there would be no question of taxing the oil and gas resources of (Southern) producer states, to be distributed to taxpayers from the rest of the country. Such a tax, if collected, would at least go back to the states whose income is being taken away. There would be no bill to make the movement of industry from North to South impossibly difficult, a bill such as Congress is right now considering. But these are merely the visible, measurable costs we are paying, the tip which shows our regional helplessness at every level.

Southern electors could meet after the November election, and throw their votes as a bloc to whichever candidate won the election in the South. One may argue that other regions could do the same

thing, both congressionally and presidentially. Practically, it would be far more difficult for other regions, for the simple reason that other regions are not nations, and a liberal Democratic Southerner finds it far easier to talk to a conservative Republican Southerner, especially about the interests of his nation, than do politicians from other regions, which are made up largely of people who happen to live close together.

If other areas do indeed work together, it will direct their minds toward the interests of their sections. If you agree with me that what is called "the national interest" too often ends up being in practical terms in the interests of the power and attitudes of Washington provincialism, this intensified regionalism would in itself be a development more than worth the effort. Regional selfishness today would be a needed counterforce to the growing power of both the military-industrial and the education-welfare establishments centered in Washington. A symbiosis based upon regional interests would be far healthier than the symbiosis of power groups which rules the country today.

If the South could force other regions and groups not based on regions to think of their own loyalties, it could act as a powerful antidote to the rootlessness of American society. Regional sympathies are not in themselves divisive, because of the nature of the political system we live under. The United States was never intended to be a substitute for the cultural identity of its parts. To ask "Americanism" to replace cultural and regional identity is to ask the Constitution to do what it was manifestly not intended to do. The Constitution is a brilliant contract, written by practical, diverse men, under rules by which their diversity could be—if the militants will excuse the term—dovetailed. Such a contract has no place in a state unit based on a monomaniacal "Americanism." For the superpatriot, in short, we have the wrong Constitution.

The question of "separatism" or enhanced regional power can be discussed seriously only if we find it possible for the South to show some signs of being willing to support its own values and identity. If the South flexed its collective muscle, it would take its natural place as the leader of the Western nationalist movements. We would demonstrate that the way to salvation from the melting pot is not Marxism, terrorism, or even separatism, but nationhood expressed in wise and practical politics. The most obvious way to defuse a separatist movement is to allow people to direct their own affairs, within their own communities. As to the practicality of such a proposal, it depends upon whether Southern nationhood is real enough to carry

into politics.

As we enter the eighties, almost any proposal makes more sense than the assertion that we are going to end this century without some sort of major political upheaval. Radicalism is in the air, even in the stodgiest air of pragmatic politics. Extremism always flourishes in such periods of despair. It is a time of storm, when "radicalism"—the desires of desperate men—needs to be anchored to bedrock. My suggestion is that the bedrock be the Nation South. ☆

**The Pattern of a Life**  
*Richard M. Weaver*

**1981**

*A memorial to E. D. Weaver, delivered August 12, 1954, before the annual reunion of the Weaver family, Weaverville, North Carolina.*

On March 9 of this year, there passed away Ethan Douglas Weaver, the oldest member of this family and its chairman for the last twenty-two years....

When Uncle Doug's life came to an end, he had reached the age of 97 years and 11 months, the greatest age ever attained by a member of this family as far as our records go. It might be good for us to think for a little while about how far into the past that life extended. You will recall that is it only a year since we listened to a message from him penned in his own hand. It is only two years since he stood before us, at that meeting held at George Ward's, and made an inspiring address. But Uncle Doug came into this world in the last year of the presidency of Franklin Pierce. Our calamitous Civil War was still several years in the future. Politically the air was resounding with talk about the slavery issue, about the Know Nothings, and about the newly formed Republican Party. Kansas and Oregon had not yet been admitted to the Union. It would be another two years before an obscure lawyer in Illinois named Lincoln would run unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate against Stephen A. Douglas. It would be another three years before the John Brown raid at Harper's Ferry.

The two sides of this continent were not even linked by the Pony Express, that coming in 1860, and it would be another thirteen years before a railroad crossed the continent. The telegraph was a novelty only twelve years old, and Uncle Doug would be a young man of twenty-three when Edison invented the electric light.

Washington Irving was still alive; Darwin had not yet published his *Origin of Species*; and Karl Marx would not publish his *Capital* for another eleven years. Nobody had ever heard of, and perhaps nobody had even thought of, a world war. I cite these facts in order to remind us of what a span of time this life embraced. But here, on this memorial occasion, we are chiefly concerned to ask, what is the meaning of this great longevity? What kind of thought and feeling does it fill us with?

I cannot help feeling that a life of this length reflects great mental and spiritual health. Today, when so many people are killing themselves with worry and with emotional indulgence, we often have oc-

casions to remark that the health of the mind is the health of the body, and that the most certain hygiene is a positive outlook on the world and honest work in the service of ideals. And when we turn to survey the life we are now commemorating, we find that it was eminent for just these things.

We see Uncle Doug as a boy, growing up in these beautiful mountains, learning, on the one hand, what nature had to teach, and on the other, imbibing from his parents the "faith of his fathers" which has been so strong a binding element with his family. We see him looking with admiring eyes upon his uncle, Captain, later Colonel James Thomas Weaver, home on furlough in his gray uniform with its gold facings. We see him approaching manhood and realizing that he must make his own way in this world, it being perhaps the good fortune of the Weavers that none of them have ever been children of fortune. Times are hard on them and opportunities look few. With a young man's natural desire to see new things, he travels over into East Tennessee. By good luck I can give you this part of his life in his own words. "Once upon a time there was a boy raised in Western North Carolina, who, when grown to manhood, found times hard and money scarce. So he wandered over into East Tennessee and became acquainted with a fine country girl. The inevitable happened—they were married. Neither one was rich, neither one was poor, but endowed with a fine fund of practical common sense. So they began immediately planning to build them a house as soon as possible." Thus he wrote of himself many years later.

This union was blessed with children to the number of ten, and at length the little home in which they had settled down began to be crowded. By hard work and economy Uncle Doug saved enough to buy a larger farm, and there, in 1895 he built the home on Monticello Road in which he lived for almost six decades....

In the whole course and tenor of his life, Uncle Doug suggests strongly the ideal citizen as he was contemplated, near the founding of this republic, by Thomas Jefferson. He was an agrarian, living on the soil; a primary producer creating things, not trafficking in the things that other men made. He did not believe in being beholden. In that spirit of independence which we associate with the builders of this country, he believed that the individual should support the state and not the state the individual. Again like a good Jeffersonian, he viewed politics with the watchful eye of the self-sustaining citizen; and many of us will recall the pithy and shrewd letters which he wrote to the local paper after he was well into his ninth decade. His mind never lost its clarity, and I can testify from personal experience

that one had to be very sure of his ground before venturing into political argument with him. There was much in this life to inspire those who cherish the early American ideals and much to rebuke those who have succumbed to easy ways and short-cut solutions.

There was also much in this life to vindicate the agrarian type of society, with its wholesomeness, its rhythms in unison with nature, and its rooted strength. What an extraordinary thing it is in this age, and what a fine thing in any age for a man to sit on his own porch and watch the shade tree he planted with his own hands grow for sixty years! This it was Uncle Doug's privilege to do, and we feel right in saying that it was an earned privilege. In a world where so much is superficial, aimless, and even hysterical, he kept a grasp upon those values which are neither old-fashioned nor new-fashioned, but are central, permanent, and certain in their reward....

Uncle Doug has gone from us now, but one of our chief purposes in setting aside this day in the year is to remind ourselves, by acts of commemoration, that the deceased are not non-existent. Apart from specific religious teachings on this subject, I think the members of this family would agree with Edmund Burke that society is a mysterious incorporation, which includes the past, the present, and the future generations in one whole. Recollection of the example of those who have departed this life influences our daily action just as certainly as do our present concerns and our speculations about the future. Only a fool tells himself that the past is dead. Therefore I take this opportunity to say that this practice of annually recalling, in a family meeting, those who can no longer be present, is neither sentimentality nor luxury. It is part of that habit of seeing life steadily and seeing it whole, of keeping fresh the memory of things, without which civil society does not exist. The words that we speak here about the departed are tribute in return for what they have given. We are sorry to have to say that in the physical sense Uncle Doug is no longer one of us. But we keep our bond, and we show the right feeling of veneration if we say that we think about him earnestly. ☆

**The Meaning of Name and Place**  
*Richard M. Weaver***1981**

*An address delivered on August 10, 1950, before the annual reunion of the Weaver family.*

Everybody admits, I believe, that the most difficult people of all for a man to convince are the members of his own family. And since I am here before a very complete gathering of my family, I look upon my case as a trifle hard, and shan't be surprised if I don't convince anyone of anything.

In thinking over subjects on which I might be qualified to speak, it occurred to me to look at Weaverville and the Weaver community through a perspective of Chicago. I have been condemned for the past six years to earn my living in that most brutal of cities, a place where all the vices of urban and industrial society break forth in a kind of evil flower. I sometimes think of the University to which I am attached as a missionary outpost in darkest Chicago. There we labor as we can to convert the heathen, without much reward of success. But of course we learn many things about what is happening to this country.

Anyone who removes to such a place from an old-fashioned society like ours, with its roots in the past and with its well-understood relationships, becomes conscious first of all of the absence of community. He is made aware that people existing together in one geographical spot do not necessarily comprise a community. There in Chicago we have a politically defined area, we have local laws and institutions, but that which makes true community, namely association on some non-material level and common attachment to some non-material ends, is lacking. One encounters the curious fact that the more closely people are crowded together, the less they know about one another, and the less they care about one another. And I think the man transplanted to such a place can sum up his perception of the people around him under two heads.

(1) *Theirs is a condition in which nobody knows who he is.* Oh, of course one knows that he bears a name, which he got from his parents, but he does not know what went into the making of it. It does not stand for any particular thing. A name there is an index rather than a characterization. Names are spelled out rather than weighed. I am not here speaking of names that rest on empty genealogical pretense—the silliness of a coat of arms. Names can gather weight in

even the humblest communities; they can become names for industry, for loyalty, for kinds of expertness, or for simple truthfulness. But in the overgrown and falsely glamorized city of which I speak, all the forces are against the establishment of names in this way. Instead, the very conditions of existence combine to make one anonymous. It has been said that the masses of a great city are people without faces. But they do have faces, and often you can see the marks of frustration on them. It would be more revealing to say that they are people without names. They come to be like mass-produced parts, polished, machined, and what is worst of all to say—interchangeable.

(2) *Nobody knows where he is from.* Oh, in a sort of objective way he knows that he had a birthplace and that he went to a certain school. But as for the more important feeling of being formed and sustained by a traditional background—this he does not have. Sometimes he tries to make this a point of pride, because the big city is on the whole the professed enemy of the local and the provincial. Usually the feud between city slicker and country fellow is presented on the level of comedy. It would be more appropriate to present it on the level of tragedy, because it conceals a deep opposition of philosophies of life. What the big city fails to see, or willfully ignores, is that provincialism is one of the chief supports of character. To be of a place, to reflect it in your speech and action and general bearing, to offer it as a kind of warranty that you will remain true to yourself—this is what it means to have character and personality. And without these things there is no individuality.

It is often observed by students of art that all the great arts of the world have been provincial. There is no such thing as an international art. It is highly doubtful that there can be such a thing as a national art. It is the province which gives to an art its particular vision of the world, or imparts to its interpretation a meaningful character. Therefore, the slickness, the anonymity, the impersonality of the great cities, which are so much sought after today, especially it would seem by the young people, are a fool's gold. These are reasons for saying that it is a good thing to have roots in a province or a locality and to express something of it in one's being. It is good to have a local habitation and a name.

I would not ascribe the fault entirely to the inhabitants of metropolis. Many of them are victims, who have never had a chance to understand what it means to be a member of a community. Often they exhibit hunger for the sort of thing community can give and make pathetic gestures in its direction. But there is no denying the tendon-

cy toward atomization of our society as long as the purely urban ideal is allowed to dominate. That is a fact which keeps the sociologists worried and keeps the philosophers pessimistic.

Now, for the first time in generations, the future of the great cities is somber. There are responsible thinkers who fear that either they are going to blow themselves up or be blown up. And I must say that I sometimes get the feeling that the big city is itself an explosive. It is only waiting the right combination to set it off. Like explosives, their leading characteristic is a high degree of instability. And that is why we hear of their more lucky citizens fleeing to cabins in the Ozarks, to New England farms, and to quiet places in our own South.

The South, as we well know, has been made up from the beginning of what I am describing as communities. Our pattern has been that of the local neighborhood, the village or perhaps county, in which men have relationships other than that of cash exchange. For this we have been subjected to a lot of ignorant ridicule. We are the country cousins of the American family. We are behind the times; we are not sufficiently sold on progress; we are even suspected of disloyalty to the American way—as that way is pictured by advertisers and exploiters. Our capacity to resist the things that emanate from New York and Chicago has been enormous. Sometimes I think the South is best described by paraphrasing a witty French phrase: "The more it changes, the more it remains the same."

Many years ago a few men were found to prophesy that the South was destined to be the great flywheel of American society. In the science of machinery, this is defined as a heavy wheel, rotating at a uniform speed, whose function is to stabilize the motion of the whole machine. If the machine speeds up too much, the flywheel holds it back; if it slows down too much, the flywheel speeds it up. The South, with its massive weight of tradition, with its pace regularized by a steady contact with nature, seems to perform that essential function. Our role has been, and I think will continue to be, that of the indispensable conservative counterpoise. We have nothing of the hysteria of the great cities. We have long memories, and it is against our instinct to build for a day. Of course this is vexing to a lot of people. There is a school of opinion in this country which considers the South a problem child. But this problem child may yet prove to be the savior of the household.

This, from such vantage point as Chicago gives, is where I see our place in the American scene. We are provincials. We have our names on the land. These are great assets. But in the midst of self-congratulation it is well to recall responsibility too. It seems to me

there are two vices which we cannot in the least afford; we cannot afford presumption and we cannot afford complacency. After all, the battle we are in—I mean in general the battle against the dehumanization of life—has been a losing one for more than a hundred years. Thus far we see only signs of change. But as society begins to look back, to ascertain the real sources of its strength, it is not presumptuous to say that we shall have to be recognized. ☆

**In Praise of Southern Manners**  
*James J. Thompson, Jr.***1981**

I have a confession to make. Loyal son of the South that I am, I have recently become fascinated with the intellectual world of New York City, especially the internecine warfare of a group of writers who first rose to prominence in the 1930s.

I have immersed myself in the poetry and fiction of Delmore Schwartz, the philosophical writings of Sidney Hook, the literary criticism of Lionel Trilling and Alfred Kazin, and the social and political commentary of Philip Rahv and Irving Howe. Of the many books written by these New Yorkers, few have piqued my interest more than Norman Podhoretz's *Making It* (1967). Podhoretz, the volatile and controversial editor of *Commentary* magazine since 1960, recounts in this volume how he scrambled up from the streets of Brooklyn to carve out a secure niche in "The Family," his designation for the tightly knit group of Jewish intellectuals who gathered first around *Partisan Review* in the 1930s, then claimed *Commentary* as their own in 1945.

Now what does all this have to do with Southern manners? Just this: Though the writings of Podhoretz and his compatriots may serve the warped fantasies of those bent on sniffing out Jewish conspiracies, they have set me to musing on the differences in background between Southerners and Jews in twentieth-century America. A thick volume would be required to draw together the variegated strands of Norman Podhoretz's early life and to contrast them with the influences which molded Willie Morris (as an example), who in *North Toward Home* wrote his tale of a Mississippi boyhood contemporaneous with Podhoretz's years in Brooklyn.

Manners present one of the most striking contrasts. A Mississippi Delta ethos of courtesy, charm, and well-mannered grace came to Willie Morris as part of his birthright. Morris grew up to take his part in that dance of manners that dictated the "sirs" and "ma'ams" and the routine politeness of everyday life. Podhoretz, by contrast came of age in Brooklyn, an entirely different ethos, more like the culture of Jewish ghettos in Eastern Europe.

I certainly do not wish to promote the old stereotype—and a vicious one at that—of the boorish, pushy Jew frantic to claw his way up the ladder of success. But obviously, Podhoretz's world, however formal in its social relations, placed no high premium upon the graceful display of manners.

Podhoretz's boyhood contact with the world of polite manners came at the hands of "Mrs. K.," a middle-aged teacher who harbored an "old-fashioned kind of patrician anti-Semitism." Mrs. K. undertook to salvage young Norman from the gutter, to play Henry Higgins to his Eliza Doolittle. His refusal to wear other than "a tee shirt, tightly pegged pants, and a red satin jacket with the legend 'Cherokees, S.A.C.' (social-athletic club) stitched in large white letters across the back" drove Mrs. K. to moans of despair; his failure to assume the trappings of gentility led her to croak that he would never be more than a "filthy little slum child."

Podhoretz carried away from his battles with the implacable Mrs. K. a lasting distaste for her arbitrary and invidious concept of manners. Though she would not have admitted it, good manners to Mrs. K. meant only one thing: conformity to a highly stylized set of surface habits and fashions which she took, quite as a matter of course, to be superior to all other styles of social behavior.

Norman Podhoretz testifies to the suffering and unhappiness caused by formal manners when they are misunderstood and misused. No doubt, others could relate similar tales of the pain they have suffered from the barbs of the Mrs. K.'s of the world. Such experiences have played some part in provoking the often vitriolic attacks on good manners that one encounters in America today. But how many of the assailants of manners can trace their animus back to the kind of humiliating confrontation that Podhoretz endured? Not many, I suspect, for most of these critics spring from the socially secure middle class. There is in American society today a general discontent with the concept of manners. To some, manners indicate a weak commitment to the great religion of egalitarianism; "sir" and "ma'am" have the ring of hierarchy about them. For those intrepid "ladies" who man the barricades of feminism, male courtliness reeks of the oppression and degradation of a sexist social order, opening a door for a woman becomes in the minds of these champions of unisex a violation of a woman's "personhood" and a stifling of her right to "self-fulfillment." For the student demonstrators of the 1960s, good manners represented the hypocrisy and superficiality of a thoroughly rotten society.

Indeed, the assault on manners has been so successful that Southern born students, now filling classrooms across the land, display only a scant trace of the South's love of courtesy. In some quarters there is active hostility toward manners; in others merely the unconcern, born of ignorance. Therefore, we are moved to ask: does the South's system of manners contain flaws so grievous that it bears within itself

the seeds of its own destruction? Have those manners led generation upon generation of Southerners into a world of superficiality and pretense? Do Southerners use their manners solely to belittle and degrade those who have not been admitted to the "club"? I, for one, refuse to answer yes to any of these questions; indeed, I am prepared to do battle (in a courteous way, of course) with those who heap guilt upon Southern heads for their devotion to an "outmoded" and "backward" code of conduct.

The problem arises in large part because many people have failed to comprehend—or even attempted to comprehend—what lies at the heart of the Southern concept of manners. These manners form outward signs of an inner conviction that man's time on this globe is not a race to be won, a puzzle to be solved, or a piece of clay to be shaped and molded. To the Southerner—male and female, black and white, rich and poor—courtesy is a formal celebration of life, and manners form a vital part of this view of life, for they inject into daily intercourse qualities that plane off the rough edges and blunt the jagged points of human contact. They provide a means whereby people convey mutual respect for fellow travelers as they pass through this world. Manners impose ritual and order upon human contacts that otherwise resemble something akin to particles violently repelling one another inside an atom. They make one a player in the drama of life, and fill one with satisfaction for having acted a role with skill and dash. In short, a code of manners helps us savor the world around us.

Most Southerners would stir restlessly in the presence of such abstractions about good manners. For them, the true meaning of the code of manners arises in a more practical way, as real people rub shoulders and pass on their separate ways. Such contact forms the substance of the South's devotion to good manners.

A black man whose age falls a year or two on either side of forty tends the pumps at the local filling station where I buy my gasoline. I see him every couple of weeks. When the precious fluid has been funneled into my pickup truck the attendant ambles over to take my money. I do not know his name (nor he mine) and our dealings involve a fleeting relationship. But we both play our roles. The ritual of manners turns the exchange of crumpled dollar bills for a tank-full of gasoline into a humane transaction. I greet him with a "Mornin'," and he returns my salutation with "Mornin', Cap'n." He comments on the weather and, on occasion, remarks on the vicissitudes and vagaries of life; I respond with an appropriate word or two. Meanwhile, impatient tourists from New Jersey seethe over our shameful waste of valuable time.

Superficial and insignificant? Perhaps. But each of us has put the other at ease by injecting a personal note into an impersonal transaction. Thus in a small way we have confirmed our humanity by investing even the most trivial of contacts with an air of goodwill.

As much can be said, at times, of the infamous species labeled "redneck," or more fondly, the "Good Ole Boy." Non-Southerners (and some Southerners as well) regard the redneck as either a mindless buffoon or a depraved slob. Well-bred middle-class students from Long Island and northeastern New Jersey lean decidedly toward the latter. The young women, especially, dread the approach of a battered pickup truck laden with grinning Good Ole Boys who pound on the sides of the truck as they speed past horrified coeds. I sometimes try (unsuccessfully) to explain this practice, and, yes, I admit, it does show a certain lack of proper courtliness toward females. But even these occasionally boorish sons of the Confederacy will often shrink into a string of meek "yes, ma'ams" and deferential shufflings when confronted directly by a lady.

To my delight, I once witnessed just such an event. I happened one day to be seated on a hedge-enshrouded bench near the restored area of Colonial Williamsburg. I noticed the approach of an attractive young woman, a camera over one shoulder and a tour guide book in hand. Down the street came the ubiquitous pickup truck, filled with three young males. Primordial barks erupted in the truck. The young woman's eyes remained riveted to her guide book. Just then the truck came to an unexpected stop to allow several people to cross the street. A grinning face hung from the truck window to leer at the young tourist. The young woman's next move startled me as much as it did the grinning redneck: she turned and walked toward the stopped truck. First off, the leering grin melted to a sheepish look of bewilderment. In a pleasant but no-nonsense voice the young lady of bold heart asked for directions to a nearby restaurant. The cab of the truck fairly bubbled over with helpfulness; at least a dozen "ma'ams" followed one another in rapid succession. After receiving directions, the young woman walked on, and with an almost audible sigh of relief from its passengers, the pickup truck eased away from the crosswalk. The young tourist had forced three Southern males to recall with alacrity what their sainted mothers and stern fathers had taught them about behavior toward womenfolk.

One of the greatest joys of my years in Williamsburg has been the friendship of two lovely and charming widowed sisters from South Carolina. Possessed of a handsome brick house filled with paintings, books, a large piano, and stately pieces of old furniture, these two

ladies epitomize the elevating and enriching power of good manners. Their graceful charm puts everyone at ease, from trash collectors to college professors. Their soft and flowing South Carolina voices smooth away the rough edges of the everyday world and imbue even mundane matters with a rich sense of the importance. Five minutes in their company, with the cool comfort of a well-iced glass of bourbon and the dulcet tones of their voices, puts me at peace with the cosmos. Their effortless grace lends veracity to those who spoke of fighting the War Between the States for Southern Womanhood.

I would like to end this paean to Southern manners on that note, but alas, a number of qualifications clamor for attention. Besides, I probably should placate the unsympathetic reader, who by now has pegged this essay as nothing more than sentimental balderdash. So in the interests of honest analysis, I must admit a few caveats into my defense of Southern manners.

To begin with, let us concede that impeccable manners cannot always be equated with spotless character. I have known more than a few Southerners, masters of the intricacies of courtliness, whom I would not trust to give me the correct time of day if we were both peering intently at the same clock. These individuals drape themselves in the cloak of good manners to hide an inner rot. But more often than not, that rottenness will eventually soak through the cloak.

I now offer a branch of peace to my Yankee friends. Unless one has spent his entire life imprisoned on a plantation in the Mississippi Delta, he knows full well that Southerners do not hold a patent on good manners. It may come as a shock to some Southerners, but other people can be polite; those who know how to say "please" and "thank you" do not all reside in Dixie. I insist, however, that no other region of the country places as high a premium upon good manners as does the South.

My last point will cause considerable discomfort to all who love the South, for it espouses an ugly exception to the reign of good manners. I refer, of course, to the treatment that Southern whites have all too often visited upon blacks. To be sure, the picture has not been as bleak as some suggest; and we must also remember that racial difficulties are shared by all regions of the country. But it must be said that black people deserve humane, courteous treatment and that they have not always received good treatment at the hands of Southern whites. The racial problem has cast a pall—one that we have often been too blind to see—over our practice of good manners. For me, this does not make the code less admirable; rather, it indicates the failure of white Southerners to live up to the ideals embod-

ied in that code at all times. The solution lies not in abandoning the code, but in realizing its full potential.

Despite flaws and shortcomings, Southerners may remain justifiably proud of the preeminence they have granted to good manners. But manners—and civility in general—have fallen upon hard times in some circles. From within and without the South, strident voices call for an end to the old ways. Future generations of Southerners (if such creatures continue to exist) may well glance back on our era and chuckle at the strange rituals of courtesy demanded by their ancestors. In the meantime, while we await the verdict of the future, I long to do one thing: I would love to present Norman Podhoretz to those two South Carolina widow ladies, seat him in one of those fine old chairs, slip a glass of good bourbon into his hand, and then lean back and watch Mr. Podhoretz be melted by authentic Southern charm. ☆

**PART THREE**  
**THE WAR AND RELATED**  
**STRUGGLES**

## Why the South Fought

Sheldon Vanauken

1984

The Thirteen Colonies in their War of Independence had fought for freedom. But the French Revolution (a true revolution of an under-class) proclaimed not only liberty but equality: and that idea was loosened on the world. But liberty (freedom) and equality are natural allies only up to a point, and then enemies. They were opposed to a degree imperfectly understood by either side in the War for Southern Independence. Which principle was henceforth to limit the other? That question was at issue.

The North, fighting for a compelled union, won; but what also won was ever broadening equality, limiting freedom. More immediately what won was—America. Henceforth Virginians and Carolinians were to be Americans and even, with a grim irony, Yankees. The “United States” ceased to be a plural term: a nation supplanted the united nations. Even the word “Union” disappeared, for the ghost of the old, dead, voluntary union of states clung about it and made it un-American. The Negro also won the war, almost incidentally, for the North did not fight for him but against his master: it was not a crusade, except for a few; and emancipation, limited to the Confederacy, was an act of war, not humanity. But the great, hidden victory was that of equality: the very words “freedom” and “equality” became confused and virtually synonymous. Now, said Karl Marx in 1866, the United States are “entering the revolutionary phase.”

What won the war everywhere was “the people”: equality not quality. Instead of two voices in balance, aristocracy and democracy, only one. Nothing henceforth was to be safe that did not have the sanction of the majority of the people, even nominally in Russia. Now the duke and the university don were to be admitted to equality with the docker; three dockers were superior to the duke and the don. Minorities ceased to have rights, despite constitutions, but only privilege sanctioned by the majority. The withdrawal of the Southern states was not sanctioned, though Virginia had entered the Union with the proviso that she could withdraw. The Mormons who trekked to remote Utah because of their religious belief in polygamy did not have that sanction, despite the Constitution. And from the majority there is no appeal.

Once it had been possible to appeal from lord to king and from king to Church. Perhaps such balance can exist only in the moment of transition from one unlimited power to another. In the United States there was no such balance in reality, for President and even

Supreme Court spoke in the name of the people (the Court "interpreting" the Constitution in that name). It was in the name of the majority of the people (more people in the North) that Lincoln conquered the Confederacy. And it is quite immaterial whether the majority, in fact, want what is done in their name: they cannot resist themselves or appeal from themselves.

Lord Acton, lover of freedom and hater of the corruption of power, prophesied rightly that this sort of "spurious liberty" must affect the rest of the world, and went on to say: "By exhibiting the spectacle of a people claiming to be free, but whose love of freedom means hatred of inequality...and reliance on the State as an instrument to mould as well as control society, [the North] calls on its admirers to hate aristocracy and teaches its adversaries to fear the people."

Who could deny that America relies on the State as an instrument to mould society? In the early days of the Republic men criticized by their fellows were given to saying, "It's a free country, isn't it?" Who says it today? The states of the South were adversaries of the Northern majority: four years later they had learnt to fear the people. This is what won the war: the principle that three pawns take two castles and five pawns take the knights as well.

It is not enough to say that the South fought for slavery—although it is said. It is not enough to say that the South fought for free trade—although it was said. It is not even enough to say that the South fought for state rights. All three are true in a sense, but none tells us why the South fought and died. The South fought because it was invaded; indeed Virginia withdrew from the Union only because Lincoln intended invasion of the earlier seceded states. Then there were alien feet upon the soil of old Virginia—and in due course upon Georgia—and Southerners fought to defend what men hold dear, their homes and their land, not for conquest.

But the simple truth is that the South fought for freedom, the freedom to go their own way, the freedom to govern themselves. They had exercised this freedom, but the North denied it and invaded. Two societies, two ways of life, clashed: at issue was the compelled conformity of the smaller to the larger. The difference between the two societies, which in colonial days had been between the dominance of "God's elect" in Puritan New England and that of great landowners in Virginia and Carolina, was deepened by climate and distance, by immigration in the North and by slave-based squirearchy in the South, and became irreconcilable, except by war or separation, when the North began in the half-born age of steam its mutation into an industrial democracy and the South remained an agrarian aristocracy.

The Southern states were in form a democracy—a slave-based “Greek democracy”—but democracy in the South was in retreat to the hills: where the Planter came (wherever the great staples would grow) he brought the ideal of the landed estate and the chivalrous gentleman. To describe both Northerners and Southerners of that time as “Americans” in today’s usage is to do violence to the truth: they were alien as well as alienated. Slavery was the economic basis of Southern society, free trade was its interest, and state rights was its defence. It fought for a way of life based upon slavery, not for slavery—an essential distinction, for squirearchy could have been based upon serfdom or tenantry and have been fought for—and against—all the same. To say that the South’s cause—freedom—was stained by slavery is to say that the cause of the Greeks at Marathon was stained by slavery. Both fought for freedom against invaders. Both would have given up their slaves for freedom, as the South offered to do for English help. The South had not yielded to the new condemnation of slavery; in time it undoubtedly would have; but time was not permitted; and the alien morality of an alien majority was imposed by conquest.

The South rightly saw a menace to its way of life in the control of the federal government by the Northern majority, and withdrew from the Union. The remaining United States could have let the Confederate States go in peace, as England was to let Canada and India go. But implicit in American democracy was the dogma that minorities—Southern or Mormon—must not be permitted to go their own way but must be compelled to conform to the will of the majority: the “king” can do no wrong. For that reason, and no other, it was “the irrepressible conflict.” “If ever the free institutions of America are destroyed,” said Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835, “that event may be attributed to the unlimited authority of the majority, which may at some future time urge the minorities to desperation, and oblige them to have recourse to physical force....[I]t will have been brought about by despotism [of the majority].”

The Southerners were, precisely, such a minority fighting that “unlimited authority.” In Lord Acton’s words, the Southerners “denied the justice of the doctrine that the minority possesses nothing which is exempt from the control of the majority,” and the very invoking of the right of secession was “a distinct repudiation of the doctrine that the minority can enforce no rights, and the majority can commit no wrong.” Secession, arguably implicit in the constitutional compact, was the counter to the absolutism of the (distant) majority. When the North refused to allow it, the appeal was to the

sword, and the right of secession perished. Lord Acton wrote later: "I mourn for the stake which was lost at Richmond more deeply than I rejoice over that which was saved at Waterloo."

The South fought for the principles of 1776—the Declaration of Independence. The North, in flat denial of those principles, invaded a country whose nationhood was proved by a way of life men willingly defended and died to save. It was a way of life that was aristocratic and based (though not necessarily) upon slavery and that was (necessarily) opposed to conformity with Northern democracy. By the very nature of that democracy perhaps, it could not suffer its will to be spurned by letting the South go in peace. The South had no choice but to conform or fight for freedom. Like the Greeks confronted by the might of Persia, the South chose to fight against odds for freedom, loving freedom—again like the Greeks—not less because they held slaves. And that was the splendour they died for—the great name of freedom. But what came on, huge and very vindictive, armed with steam and endless guns, bearing the compulsive mandate of the majority of the "whole people" (i.e., the North), was not to be withstood. The South had only its heartbreaking valour and General Lee. Four years it stood with desperate fortitude, praying for help from England, and then went down and was drowned. ☆

**The Quotable Robert E. Lee**  
*Rod Gragg*

**1989**

Upon completing his exhaustive, definitive four-volume biography of Lee, historian Douglas Southall Freeman, who would win a Pulitzer Prize for *R. E. Lee*, recalled the multitude of obstacles and challenges he had encountered in producing the monumental biography, yet proclaimed with satisfaction, "I have been fully repaid by being privileged to live, as it were, for more than a decade in the company of a great gentleman."

Few public figures in any age have bequeathed such an enduring legacy of national respect and affection, and seldom has any military commander so infused his troops with the love and esteem displayed toward Lee by his heralded Army of Northern Virginia. So ardent was their devotion that a battle-hardened Johnny Reb, in the anguish of Appomattox, shouted with a conviction no doubt shared by his comrades, "I love you just as much as ever, General Lee."

When they chanced to encounter their former commander after the war, veterans who had worn gray through the smoke and flame of combat would automatically emit the famed Rebel Yell in recognition or, hat in hand, would stand mutely transfixed in silent salute. Children of the South who had the opportunity to shake Lee's hand at his passing would marvel decades later—as white-headed old men—at the power of Lee's presence. Today he remains the embodiment of all that was good and noble in the Old South. Despite the passage of time and the ever-changing whims of popular culture, Robert E. Lee retains his position as the foremost Southern hero.

Here, gleaned from countless sources, are Lee's views on a variety of subjects—expressed in his own words.

***Adversity***

"We must be resigned to necessity, and commit ourselves in adversity to the will of a merciful God as cheerfully as in prosperity. All is done for our good and our faith must continue unshaken."

***Battle***

"You have no idea what a horrible sight a field of battle is."

***The Bible***

"I prefer the Bible to any other book. There is enough in that to satisfy the most ardent thirst for knowledge; to open the way to true wisdom; and to teach the only road to salvation and eternal happiness."

### ***Bitterness***

“I believe I may say, looking into my own heart, and speaking in the presence of God, that I have never known one moment of bitterness or resentment.”

### ***Child Discipline***

“Mildness and forbearance, tempered by firmness and judgment, will strengthen their affection for you, while it will maintain your control over them.”

### ***Conduct***

“Be true, kind and generous, and pray earnestly to God to enable you to keep His commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life.”

### ***The Confederate Dead***

“The graves of the Confederate dead will always be green in my memory, and their deeds be hallowed in my recollection....”

### ***The Constitution***

“...I trust that the Constitution may undergo no change, but that it may be handed down to succeeding generations in the form we received it from our forefathers.”

### ***Duty***

“Do your duty in all things....You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less.”

### ***The Earth***

“What a glorious world Almighty God has given us. How thankless and ungrateful we are and how we labor to mar His gifts.”

### ***Education***

“I consider the proper education of our youth one of the most important objects now to be attained and one from which the greatest benefits may be expected.”

### ***Elected Officials***

“I am of the opinion that all who can should vote for the most intelligent, honest and conscientious men eligible to office.”

***Enemies***

"There is a good old Book which I read...which says, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.'"

***Failure***

"...in the good providence of God apparent failure often proves a blessing."

***Faith***

"My trust is in the mercy and wisdom of a kind Providence, who ordereth all things for our good."

***Farming***

"A farmer's life is one of labor, but it is also one of pleasure, and the consciousness of steady improvement, though it may be slow, is very encouraging."

***Government Balance of Power***

"While I have considered the preservation of the Constitutional power of the general government to be the foundation of our peace and safety at home and abroad, I yet believe that the maintenance of the rights and authority reserved in the states and to its people, is not only essential to the adjustment and balance of the general system, but the safeguard to the continuance of a free government."

***Heaven***

"Oh, that we may be at last united in the heaven of rest, where trouble and sorrow never enter, to join an everlasting chorus of praise and glory to our Lord and Savior!"

***History***

"It is history that teaches us to hope."

***History and the South***

"The reputation of individuals is of minor importance [compared] to the opinion posterity may form of the motives which governed the South in their late struggle for the maintenance of the principles of the Constitution. I hope, therefore, a true history will be written, and justice done them."

***The Horrors of War***

“It is well that war is so terrible – we should grow too fond of it!”

***Human Nature***

“May God rescue us from the folly of our own acts, save us from selfishness and teach us to love our neighbors as ourselves.”

***Inerrancy of Scripture***

“There are many things in the [Bible] which I may never be able to explain, but I accept it as the infallible Word of God, and receive its teachings as inspired by the Holy Ghost.”

***Instruction of a Child***

“Teach him he must deny himself.”

***Joining the Confederacy***

“I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonor. And if it all were to be done over again, I should act in precisely the same manner.”

***Knowledge***

“The education of a man or woman is never completed till they die.”

***Last Words***

“Strike the tent.”

***The Law***

“Obedience to lawful authority is the foundation of manly character.”

***Lee's Credo***

“True patriotism sometimes requires of men to act exactly contrary, at one period, to that which it does at another, and the motive which impels them — the desire to do right — is precisely the same. The circumstances which govern their actions change: and their conduct must conform to the new order of things.”

***Life***

“Get correct views of life, and learn to see the world in its true light. It will enable you to live pleasantly, to do good, and, when summoned away, to leave without regret.”

***Marriage***

"Never marry unless you can do so into a family that will enable your children to feel proud of both sides of the house."

***Military Philosophy***

"There is always a hazard in military movements, but we must decide between the positions of inaction and the risk of action."

***National Character***

"As long as virtue [is] dominant in the republic, so long is the happiness of the people secure."

***Nature***

"In the woods, I feel sympathy with the trees and birds, in whose company I take delight."

***Obedience***

"You cannot be a true man until you learn to obey."

***Offensive Warfare***

"The blow, whenever struck, must, to be successful, be sudden and heavy."

***Parental Love***

"Experience will teach you that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, you will never receive such a love as is felt for you by your father and mother. That lives through absence, difficulties and time."

***Partying***

"Do not go out to many parties, preserve your simple taste and manners, and you will enjoy more pleasure."

***Personal Motivation***

"God's will ought to be our aim, and I am quite contented that His designs should be accomplished and not mine."

***Personal Priorities***

"Above all things, learn at once to worship your Creator and to do His will as revealed in His Holy Book."

***Personal Responsibility***

"No blame can be attached to the army [of Northern Virginia at Get-

tysburg] for its failure to accomplish what was projected by me, nor should it be censured for the unreasonable expectations of the public. I alone am to blame...."

***Prayer***

"No day should be lived unless it was begun with a prayer of thankfulness and an intercession for guidance."

***The Press***

"Too bad that all our worst generals are in command of the armies and our best generals are editing newspapers."

***Principle***

"There is a true glory and a true honor; the glory of duty done—the honor of the integrity of principle."

***The Proffered Command of the U. S. Army***

"I declined the offer...stating as candidly and as courteously as I could that, though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could take no part in the invasion of the Southern States."

***Reading***

"...find time to read and improve your mind. Read history, works of truth, not novels and romances."

***Reasoning***

"One good reason is always enough."

***Reconciliation***

"I think it wisest not to keep open the sores of war, but to follow the example of those nations who endeavored to obliterate the marks of civil strife."

***Religious Tolerance***

"Always respect the religious views and feelings of others."

***Rules***

"We must never make a rule that we cannot enforce."

***Salvation***

"I can only say that I am nothing but a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation."

***Saying Grace***

"At home I usually do so."

***Secession***

"Secession is nothing but revolution....Still, a union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets, in which strife and civil war are to take the place of brotherly love and kindness, has no charm for me."

***Self-Reliance***

"We make a great deal of our own happiness and misery in this world, and we can do more for ourselves than others can for us. You must expect discomforts and annoyances all through life. No place or position is secure from them and you must make up your mind to meet them and bear them."

***Slavery***

"The best men of the South have long been anxious to do away with this institution, and were quite willing to see it abolished."

"So far from engaging in a war to perpetuate slavery, I am rejoiced that slavery is abolished. I believe it will be greatly for the interest of the South. So fully am I satisfied of this...that I would cheerfully have lost all I have lost by the war and suffered all I have suffered, to have this object attained."

***Soldiering***

"A soldier has a hard life and but little consideration."

***Southern Independence***

"...our sole object [was] the establishment of our independence and the attainment of an honorable peace."

***Strong Drink***

"My experience through life has convinced me that, while moderation and temperance in all things are commendable and beneficial, abstinence from spirituous liquors is the best safeguard of morals and health."

***Tobacco***

"Chewing is particularly obnoxious to me."

### ***Truthfulness***

"Private and public life are subject to the same rules; and truthfulness and manliness are two qualities that will carry you through this world much better than policy, or tact, or expediency—or any other word that was ever devised to conceal or mystify a deviation from a straight line."

### ***The Underprivileged***

"Occupy yourself in aiding those more helpless than yourself."

### ***The Union***

"I wish to live under no other government, and there is no sacrifice I am not ready to make for the preservation of the Union — save that of honor."

### ***Virginia***

"With all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, and my home."

### ***Virtue***

"Hold on to your purity and virtue. They will sustain you in every calamity."

### ***War***

"But what a cruel thing is war; to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world; to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world."

### ***The War Between the States***

"It was an unnecessary condition...and might have been avoided if forbearance and wisdom had been practiced on both sides."

### ***Why the South Fought***

"All that the South has ever desired was that the Union, as established by our forefathers, should be preserved, and that the government as originally organized should be administered in purity and truth."

### ***A Worthy Ambition***

"My chief concern is to try to be an humble, earnest Christian."☆

**Stonewall: By Name and Nature**  
*by Holmes Alexander*

1983

Stonewall lay dying of his wounds at Chancellorsville—"the most successful movement of my life," he murmured, and then remembered to give full credit to God. "I feel His hand led me." He had smashed Fighting Joe Hooker and 134,000 invaders of Virginia with 60,000 Confederates.

Eight days would pass from the night of May 2, 1863, when a Confederate volley ironically struck Jackson down, until his beloved physician, Dr. Hunter Holmes McGuire, his ear close to the General's lips, made out the unforgettable words, "Let us cross the river and rest under the shade of the trees." The length of the death watch gave ample time for soldiers' talk of battle, death, and wartime politics. Much of it took place around Jackson's shattered body which had been moved by litter and wagon-ambulance, often under Yankee artillery barrage to Guiney's station some forty-five miles from Richmond. Somebody mentioned the then pending resolution before the Confederate government to designate Jackson's original command the Stonewall Brigade, wholly unprecedented in military orders.

Out of the fumes of whiskey, chloroform and antimony and opium with which Dr. McGuire had dosed his patient while amputating his left arm and fighting pleuro-pneumonia, Stonewall spoke up to disclaim the Stonewall title. He always said it belonged to the First Virginia Brigade. Now he murmured that the "Government ought to certainly accede...and authorize them to assume the title; for it was fairly earned."

He gasped for breath and repeated what he often had told to presumptuous strangers. "The name Stonewall ought to be attached wholly to the men of the brigade and not to me." No one except his commander, General Lee, is known to have gone unrebuked for mentioning "our Stonewall" in Jackson's presence.

But the disclaimer, then and forever, came to be universally ignored, and his contemporaries said he came by the name long before it was given him. They remembered him as a gritty boy. One West Virginia lady recalled him in bed with a mustard plaster across his chest when a rider was needed for a small errand. He quietly mounted and carried out the mission. When asked why he hadn't removed the plaster first, he said he expected to bear pain in life, and had better get used to it.

There was only one Stonewall, and yet a century after him, in

writing his biography, I found that many Americans had to be told that the true name of the world-famous warrior, born on January 21, 1824, in the only brick house in Clarksburg, Virginia, was Thomas Jonathan Jackson; furthermore, that Old Hickory, Andrew Jackson of Tennessee, was another fellow.

He had been shy and withdrawn from childhood, unsophisticated about women. While a bachelor-professor at the Virginia Military Institute, he confessed to a strange malaise and his friend, General-to-be D. H. Hill, playfully told Jackson he was in love. Among the few eligible females in the small college town of Lexington, Virginia were Ellie and Maggie, daughters of the Reverend Junkin, president of Washington College. The girls were five years apart in age, but dressed and behaved like inseparable twins, so that a less susceptible, absent-minded professor than Jackson might have made a mistake. In any event, Jackson became engaged and married to the younger, Ellie. Poor Ellie died in childbirth, after fourteen months of marriage, and Jackson plunged off on a three-month tour of Europe. But Tom soon married another Presbyterian minister's daughter, the plump, jolly Anna Morrison of North Carolina.

All of the women in Tom's life, including his younger sister Laura, thought him a dashing good-looker (this was before he let his trim military mustache and British sideburns sprout into a beard), but he was not always so sharp. When he arrived, in 1842, at West Point, he looked a bumpkin in his homespun clothing, carrying his sweat-stained saddle bags.

The raw country boy, with his long, awkward stride and clumsy seat on horseback, was so unsoldierly that some cadets mockingly called him "General" after the hero of New Orleans and former President. He gradually became "Hickory," which degenerated into Hick and Fool Tom, nicknames that dogged him for ten difficult years as a classroom figure of ridicule.

Even after assuming the Confederate Army commission, Jackson was seldom spruce, in a forage cap pulled down over his nose, enormous cavalry boots and rumpled blue Union coat which he neglected to replace until Jeb Stuart sent him a tailored gray garb. His eccentricities caused many subordinates to question his sanity, but he had a coterie of devoted friends. The name which acquired unbounded affection was "Old Jack." His men loved to cheer him with it.

To compound confusion about names, he wasn't baptized until age twenty-four when a muddled Episcopal rector at St. John's Church, Long Island, entered him in the register as Thomas Jefferson Jackson (instead of Thomas Jonathan Jackson). Had he noticed

the slip, Brevet Major Jackson, by then a conspicuous hero at the storming of Mexico City, 1847, would have exploded with rare high-caliber rage, but he probably was unaware. Even in the prime years he was short of sight, hard of hearing, absent-minded and known in military, academic, and social circles as a hypochondriac. He had reason to be sensitive about that "Jonathan," which he had inserted during adolescence as an act of defiance.

Jonathan Jackson, his father, had been the weakling of an extraordinarily hearty tribe (being one of fifteen whose six-foot mother lived to be 105). Jonathan was a failed lawyer amid relatives who were legal eagles of the frontier, an embezzler of political funds to the mortification of the Jacksons who were peacock proud of their integrity. Jonathan died when Tom was too young to remember him, but it was his often-repeated ambition in letters to Laura and other relatives to restore the family "fame."

He intended to do this in the practice of law, where his male relatives had been luminaries, going on to serve in the legislature, Congress, federal and state conventions, or as a "soldier of the Cross," for he admired the Christian clergy above all other professions. But he learned in Mexico that he was born to fight.

"Fame!" The dying soldier slept fitfully, and at wakeful interludes talked of immortality—but the spiritual kind—with Chaplain Drury Lacy, who slipped away with Jackson's amputated arm and reverently buried it at Elwood, the nearby family estate. Jackson, at thirty-eight with hardly two years activity in this War Between the States, could not know that he would be accorded acclaim beyond any officer of the struggle. Statues would rise to him on both sides of the Potomac—in Richmond, Virginia and Charleston, West Virginia; in Lexington, Virginia, Baltimore and Clarksburg, West Virginia. There in his birthtown, the local chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy pooled their widow's mites and purchased what they could afford, a small equestrian statue of a museum piece which they mounted on the plaza of the Harrison County courthouse.

He could not know that such renown from friend and foe, in a losing and unpopular war, was equally rendered for his integrity of character as for his generalship. After Jackson's death, Lincoln wrote to the Washington Daily Chronicle and thanked its editorial writer for "the excellent and manly article in the Chronicle on Stonewall Jackson." The editor had written that Jackson's death had removed from the "accursed cause" of secession "its bravest, noblest, and purest defender."

It was sporting of Lincoln because in April, 1861 Jackson and his

Virginians helped stem a Yankee drive at the First Battle of Manassas, turning a seeming Northern victory into a rout that carried thirty miles away to the bridges of Washington. It was only the beginning in the arms-length chess game of war between Old Jack and Old Abe. Driven by public demand for a quick subjugation of these upstart rebels, Lincoln first attacked on the ill-fated banks of Bull Run. When foiled there, Lincoln sent a huge invasion army with Navy escort to strike Richmond from the peninsula between the James and York Rivers. But flanking both Washington and the invasion force under Major General George B. McClellan lay the fertile Shenandoah Valley—and Stonewall Jackson.

Lincoln recalled what had happened in James Madison's administration when marauders stormed over the White House lawn and Capitol Hill, putting the government buildings to the torch. The President set out to smash Jackson with overwhelming numbers, thus removing both the menace to Washington and to McClellan's position before Richmond. But Jackson beat Lincoln's generals, one by one: McDowell, Banks, Fremont, Pope, and now Hooker.

The smitten Jackson was cogent enough to surmise from the number of clergymen and surgeons around him, as well as the arrival of Anna and their baby from Richmond, that he was not expected to live much longer. His life had seen the strange mix of sad and glad. Laura, the devoted kid sister, had turned Unionist when their mountain counties had become West Virginia. She said she would rather have her brother dead than a Rebel leader.

But what companions they once had been! At their father's death the Clarksburg brick house was sold for debt, and the widowed Julia Jackson accepted a much smaller price from the Order of Masons. She tried to support her three surviving children by going out to sew and teach, but when they took to escaping into the town she decided to plant them among relatives—Warren, the eldest, to her own people, the Neales of Wood County on the Ohio; Tom and Laura to Jackson's Mill, some eight miles away.

This was Jackson country. Hundreds of acres of timberland went with the estate, a powerful man-made dam turned the wheels to saw planks, grind corn, move machinery in the various shops. Jackson's Mill was a village industry not unlike Mount Vernon, except that the Jacksons, who worked side by side with their slaves, were gifted mechanics as well as builders, harvesters, cattle raisers, and horse racers.

Tom was definitely First Family, both in wealth and prominence. What happiness he lived with his giant guardian, Uncle Cummins,

the political boss, and with Laura, to whom he wrote from West Point about life at the Mill, where there were "none to give mandate; none for me to obey but as I chose, supported by my playmates and relatives, all apparently to promote my happiness."

But sorrows came. Tom's mother, Julia, remarried a no-account lawyer, Blake Woodson, for whom Uncle Cummins found a clerkship in the new wilderness county of Fayette, and soon Tom and Laura were riding behind the saddles of relatives to the desolate county seat of Anent where Julia was dying of childbed fever. She gave them her blessing, a religious memory that never left Tom. But Woodson buried Julia in an unmarked grave that Tom never could find, in a state that proved as faithless as Laura to the Old Dominion. Now Anna came beside him. Hardly more than a week ago she had stayed with him at winter headquarters, and "he was in the full flush of vigorous manhood, and during that last blessed visit, I never saw him look so handsome, so happy and so noble." Today he was maimed and feeble, his body scarred from the undergrowth he had been dragged through. She knelt and said that "before this day closes you will be with the blessed Savior in His glory." Old Jack did not fear death, but he thought the Lord God still had need of him on earth. Ever since First Manassas, he had been nagging the Jefferson Davis government to abandon the defense of Virginia and go North. "Press on. Press on," he would say in council and in battle.

Back in boyhood in Jackson's Mill, he had discovered his military genius without knowing it. Much he learned from the Old Testament battles. Uncle Cummins' patronage got him the post of county constable, and he outwitted scoundrels. He worked on cutting the mountains from the Staunton-to-Parkersburg turnpike, but before that he had prowled the hills which had once been the buffalo hunting grounds of the Shawnee Indians. He curiously followed the faint trails of the hunted and the hunter, finding there the shortest and well-hidden paths to springs, salt licks, fords, and clearings. The reason he beat all of Lincoln's generals in the Valley campaigns was his topographer, Jed Hotchkiss, whom Stonewall ordered to map every acre between Harper's Ferry and Winchester. Not Napoleon nor Cromwell, but Hotchkiss, was the reason Stonewall's men so often turned up unexpectedly when the Union generals thought them miles away.

Chaplain Lacy turned up with a verbal get-well message from Lee: "He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right arm."

It was well and generously said. Lee had never won a battle without Jackson, and never lost one with him. The night before

Chancellorsville, Jackson had mulled with Hotchkiss over a map spread on a cracker box. With them were Lee and Charles Wellford, proprietor of Catharine Furnace, an iron foundry deep in the woods known as the Wilderness, and the Wellfords' sixteen-year-old son.

Were there any little-known trails through the Wilderness, Jackson wanted to know. Hotchkiss soon traced them out on a map, quite a different battle plan than Lee had previously drawn, but the commander acceded to Jackson's advice. Leaving Lee with two reserve divisions, Jackson set off before dawn with most of the Confederate corps. They marched all day, unseen, to strike Hooker's superior forces in the rear and send them fleeing in panic.

"They are running too fast for us," cried a young officer to Old Jack. "We can't keep up with them."

"They never run too fast for me, sir," Stonewall replied. He would like to chase Fighting Joe into the Rappahannock and beyond. That is why he was out in front of his own pickets when a North Carolina scouting unit fired into the darkness and brought him down.

A single shot fired from a friendly rifle achieved what none of Lincoln's generals had been able to do. Stonewall was dead. Without him the cause was lost. ☆

**The World After the South Won**  
**Sheldon Vanauken**

**1984**

**PART ONE\***

1862. In that year the balance of the bayonets on the battlefields of North America was plainly falling on the Southern side, owing to the genius of General Lee. In England, watching with the absorbed attention that had never waned after *The Times'* vivid account of the battle near Washington at Antietam and the passions aroused by the *Trent* affair, everyone knew that English recognition of the Confederate States and even intervention were more than a possibility.

Many of the "educated million," deeply sympathetic to the South, expected action by the Government at any moment. Powerful men, who believed that the traditional English way of life would be endangered by a Northern success, endeavoured to force the Cabinet to ensure Confederate independence. Others, deeply stirred by the valiant struggle of the South, urged England to help it as they had helped freedom fighters in Greece and Italy. Countless appeals stressed the same points: The South is English, unlike the North which has become mongrel through immigration. Moreover, the South is led by gentlemen—English gentlemen—and the war is (as one columnist summed up the general sentiment) an affair of "Gentlemen vs Cads." The Southerners, our kinsmen, have proved by their indomitable spirit that they are worthy of independence; England must abide her traditions and help them.

A.J.B. Beresford Hope, the brother-in law of the Marquess of Salisbury, wrote: *I declare that the cause of the South is the cause of freedom, the cause of those principles of constitutional government which we desire to see prevailing all over the world...If we made allowances for Italy, should we not be willing to make equal allowances for our own flesh and blood...who are trying to raise up a new English nation...? They have passed the Red Sea—shall we never give them a hand that they may reach the promised land?*

Such an appeal, it would seem, could not be made in vain. Indeed, that keen French observer of the English scene, Louis Blanc, wrote for his paper in France early in 1862: "I say...without hesitation, because I think it to be a fact, that everything here [in England] is preparing for a signal recognition of the Southern States." Thus when Gladstone, one of "the Triumvirate" that led the Cabinet, told the wildly cheering crowd at Newcastle that Jefferson Davis had made not only an Army and a Navy but a *nation*, it was held to be

tantamount to recognition. As the pro-Northern *Spectator* said: "We cannot...blame the Cabinet. They have only followed the lead of the people, and followed it at far distance. The educated million in England, with here and there an exception, have become unmistakably Southern...[T]he Cabinet has made up its mind that the American struggle is over, and that henceforward two nations must exist on the American continent." Far from disagreeing with *The Spectator*, Louis Blanc was inclined to suspect that Gladstone was "courting popularity" by appealing to the universal Southern feeling; Gladstone's words, he said, "went straight to the heart of the nation," which responded with a great cry of "Down with the North! The South forever!"

### **PART TWO: ALL ENGLAND AWAITED THE NEXT MOVE\***

There was not long to wait. The Cabinet, after, in Lord Acton's words, "taking one of the most momentous resolutions ever adopted by a Ministry,"\* were now prepared to move swiftly. The Newcastle speech was delivered on October 7th, 1862, and on the first day of November England and France, which had long advocated such a joint move, proposed mediation to the warring American nations. It was a favourable moment, for, as Gladstone had observed in his Memorandum to the Cabinet, "fortunes have been placed for the moment in *equilibrio* by the failure of the main invasions on both sides." That the Confederate States would gratefully accept the good offices of the European powers and the United States belligerently refuse them had been expected by the Ministry. Both the acceptance and the rejection were by the 25th of November in the hands of Lord John Russell, the Foreign Secretary. But, as he himself had said earlier, if the North refused mediation, England would have no alternative but to recognise the South. On the first day of December, therefore, the Queen's Proclamation recognising the Confederate States of America was issued, to be followed by that of France and other powers. It was at this juncture there occurred the famous dialogue between the Foreign Secretary and the United States Minister in which his lordship endeared himself to generations of schoolboys by uttering what has become, by reason of its brevity, his most memorable remark. Making his final call before sailing, Minister Adams said stiffly: "It would be superfluous in me to point out to your Lordship that this is war." Rising to show that the interview was over, his lordship said: "Damme! Quite!"

The events which followed are familiar to everyone. The welcome

tidings of their recognition reached the Confederate States on December 12th, and on the following day Lee's army, no doubt heartened by the news, crushed the enemy at Fredericksburg. Nevertheless, the United States, refusing even in defeat to accept what all the world could see must be accepted, declared war—with a courage that was as admirable as it was foolish—on both England and France. It was regrettable but, as Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, said, "not perhaps a very formidable thing for England and France combined."

And the editor of *The Times* wrote to Russell that "the whole Army, Navy, and Volunteers are of one mind and all mad for service in America. For once, the Navy has been found ready when wanted; as to the Army, we might recruit each company into a battalion if necessary." The Government, though, intended to leave the operations on land in the capable hands of the Confederates, merely reinforcing the troops in Canada. But there was work for the Navy. As Winston Churchill observed in his study of this war, "The Northern blockade could not be maintained even for a day in the face of the immense naval power of Britain"; and, as he also wrote, "The Northern forces at New Orleans were themselves immediately cut off and forced to capitulate." This event caused huge celebrations in London, less because an old defeat was thus avenged than because of the summary hanging of General "Beast" Butler from the yardarm of the Royal Navy flagship.

We need not linger over the subsequent events of the war. Despite another grave defeat at Chancellorsville in the spring of 1863 and a growing peace party in the North, the United States continued to resist and even to make preparations to send an expedition into Canada. The Cabinet, therefore, decided to avert such an invasion, if possible, by reinforcing the Confederate armies. Two months later General Lee led his veteran army across the United States frontier into Pennsylvania, and the British Expeditionary Force, which had just been landed in Virginia, were sent to join him. Before they reached the scene, Lee had joined battle with a large American army near the village of Gettysburg.

Winston S. Churchill, in his thoughtful study, "If Lee Had Not Won the Battle of Gettysburg," has shown how close an affair it really was. The crucial moment came on the third day when Lee ordered an attack on the strong Northern centre. Pickett and the Virginians swept forward into their deathless charge. But, gallant as it was, we know now that they could not have held the position without reinforcements. And there was not another Southern man to spare. But in one

of those timely arrivals that suggest the workings of Providence, the British regiments, led by the Coldstream Guards, were just swinging into the line. The field was won—and the war as well. Three days later the Allies entered Washington unopposed. And a fortnight later the United States Government at the new Capital in Portland, Maine, yielded to the universal cry for peace and capitulated.

It is not necessary to examine the generous terms of peace that the Allies imposed. Our concern is rather with the effects of the victory on the Allies themselves. The Confederacy was now independent, and England had now a firm friend in the new world. As Churchill put it, "Gladstone achieved not merely the recognition but an abiding alliance between Great Britain and the Southern States." It was an alliance destined to become even closer when the South became, somewhat later, a member of the British Commonwealth, and its President became Prime Minister, with a Royal Governor to open the Parliament at Richmond in the name of the Queen.

In England one of the first effects of the victory was that John Bright and indeed the "Manchester School" lost such influence as they possessed. It was widely recognised that they had supported the brutal attempt of the United States to conquer the Confederacy in hopes of gaining power through the working classes. But these had not been greatly impressed; the great heart of England was sound in this struggle between Northern conquest and Southern freedom. One historian has, we may notice, suggested that the failure of the working classes to raise a cry for Government action in the great cotton famine might be interpreted as sympathy for the North or for the doctrines of John Bright; but the fact that in Liverpool—the most Confederate city outside the Confederacy—no sympathizer with the United States could even hold a job—tells against the interpretation. It is surely far more probable, as most historians agree, that their quiet was simply the proverbial patience of the British working man and his trust in the Queen's Government—which, as the event demonstrated, was very well-founded indeed.

The decline of the "Manchester School" was but a sign of the underlying reality of the discrediting of the doctrine they had preached: the universal suffrage that must lead to that tyranny of the majority de Tocqueville warned against and the Southern States had suffered from. The general recognition that it was a dangerously unsound doctrine was decisively shown in England by the overwhelming failure of the Reform Bill of 1867. We today, who perceive the fatal flaw, the lack of balance, in the doctrine that three dockers should outweigh the duke and the don—that, so to speak, the pawns should

take the knights and the castles—may wonder how some Englishmen in the 1860s could even have considered it; but it must be remembered that the United States before the War of Northern Aggression had held forth a beguiling if specious promise of prosperity as well as proclaiming a spurious “liberty” that was, in fact, not liberty but equality. And our present concept of a balanced society in which the major elements—the business interest, the working classes of the cities, and the rural people—are equally represented, regardless of numbers, which may be called true equality, and each with that veto upon the others that is so sure a protection to minorities: such a concept was then scarcely a dream.

It must indeed be regarded as one of the fruits of that great victory upon the plains of Pennsylvania, a victory now regarded as the most decisive since Waterloo. Some in fact, believe it to be *more* important: Lord Acton, more aware than most people of the corruption of power, including that of the majority, said that he rejoiced more deeply over the stake won by the South at Gettysburg than that saved at Waterloo.

Another result of that victory has been the firm establishment of the principle of self-determination, to which even the United States and Russia now give assent. An equally important result of the victory was, as the Confederate Commissioner to London, J. M. Mason—Sir James as he became—had promised, the gradual ending of slavery. It was in 1875 that the Southern Prime Minister, Lord Arlington—or, to use a more familiar designation, General Lee—announced that the several states had agreed that all slaves born after the last day of 1879 would be free; and the Confederacy thereupon embarked on that benign programme of slowly raising the Negro to the limits of his ability. A few years later the United States also emancipated the small number of slaves in their territories. We can only be grateful that emancipation of slavery in the South came about in this way and that the sinister Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln—an invitation to the slaves to rise against their masters, or more precisely their mistresses, since the men were with the army—had no effect. Lincoln, himself, an inherently kindly man, has confessed in his *Apology for My Administration* (Portland 1871) that he was deeply thankful that the slaves did not rise.

One more result of the Allied victory at Gettysburg must not be neglected: the complete discrediting of that barbarism in warfare that marked the efforts of the Americans to subdue the Southerners—the barbarism of Generals Sherman and Sheridan and “Beast” Butler. It is to be hoped that no civilised nation will again make use of such

methods. There is, indeed, reason to hope that no civilised nation will again resort to war of any sort. In the nearly fifty years of world peace which have followed the Great War or One Year War of 1914-1915 when the Allies so completely defeated Germany—a victory, incidentally, that might not have been so swiftly won but for the Confederate divisions under the second Marquess of Arlington—the Kaisers appear to have relinquished their dreams of militaristic glory. These, then, are some of the things that such far-sighted Englishmen as Beresford Hope and the many other supporters of the South fought for on the lecture platform and with the pen while General Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia fought so gallantly in the field. The world owes them a great deal. Had these dedicated English supporters of the South not perceived what was at issue, England might not have acted; and there is a real possibility—though many historians will disagree—that if England had remained neutral, the United States with their vast resources might have conquered the South and occupied it as an inferior province. All in all they had a remarkably clear vision of what was at stake. And these things were at issue when Lord Palmerston's Ministry took their most momentous decision. They were at issue when, in Winston Churchill's resounding words, the Allies "by a deathless feat of arms broke the Union front at Gettysburg and laid open a fair future to the world."

### AN AFTERWORD WHY DIDN'T THE BRITISH INTERVENE?

A German general, von Bernhardi (quoted by W. A. Dunning. *The British Empire and the United States* [London, 1914], p. xxxii), said: "England committed the unpardonable blunder, from her point of view, of not supporting the Southern States in the American War of Secession." Few historians, either English or American, now suppose England's neutrality to have been a blunder in the way they regard England's passivity to the rise of Hitler as a blunder; but it must be supposed that had England ensured Southern independence, that action would now be celebrated in London and Richmond and largely approved by historians. The most that can be said is that from the point of view of the "educated million" of *that* England of the mid-19th century it was a blunder. The War of American Independence was won because of the assistance of France. The War of Southern Independence could almost certainly have been won with the assistance of England. Whether that would have been for the better or worse, in the long run, no man can say—only opine, more or less fiercely.

An equally intriguing question that may be raised by this exercise in what might have been is this: if the "educated million" in England were, as described by Louis Blanc and *The Spectator* and as shown by Beresford Hope and Lord Acton, so passionately Southern, and if Lord Palmerston's Ministry (with the firm support of France) were so close to acting, why didn't they? This writer has pondered that question in *The Glittering Illusion: English Sympathy for the Southern Confederacy* (Regnery) and is convinced that the brilliant success of the Southern army under Lee convinced the Ministry, *The Times*, and much of the "educated million," that the South must inevitably win anyway. "The Glittering Illusion," held right up to 1865, is that the North's effort to reconquer the South was doomed. ☆

\*The quotations are genuine, but not in context.

**"Jim Limber Davis"**  
*Peggy Robbins*

**1989**

On the morning of February 15, 1864, Varina Davis, wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, returning from an errand, was riding in her carriage toward her Richmond home, the White House of the Confederacy, when she saw a small, thin, screaming Negro boy being savagely beaten by a Negro man. Mrs. Davis quickly had her carriage stopped; she ran to the scene, stunned the man with her bold, harsh demand that he immediately stop striking the boy, physically took the child away from the man and to her carriage, and returned with him to the White House. There she and her maid Ellen tenderly bathed and comforted him, doctored his cuts, and fed him. They guessed he was about the age of—perhaps a little older than—the Davises' son Joe, who was two months short of five; the two were about the same height. Varina told Ellen that she would "do terrible things" to anyone who treated her Joe as cruelly as the "wicked man" had treated the little boy they were doctoring. Both women were delighted to see the child's "satisfied appearance"; he seemed "so pleased to have fallen into kind hands."

On the evening of the next day, noted Southern diarist Mary Boykin Chesnut, an intimate friend of Varina's, wrote that she had visited with the Davises at the White House and had seen Jim Limber. She wrote, "The child is an orphan Mrs. Davis rescued yesterday from his brutal Negro guardian. He was proudly dressed up in little Joe's clothes and happy as a lord. He was very anxious to show me his wounds and bruises....There are some things in life too sickening, and such cruelty is one of them."

No one in Richmond was surprised to hear that Varina Davis, with her husband's total approval, had snatched the Negro boy away from his tormentor and settled him in as a member of the Presidential household, and that the Davises had virtually adopted him. Varina, whom Mary Chesnut described as "so clever, so brilliant, so spicy and spirited, so very warm-hearted, compassionate and considerate," was well-known for her efforts in behalf of children. People liked to tell about her urging the Davis children to invite youngsters—any youngsters—to the White House grounds to play. Some recalled the day of Varina's first arrival in Richmond, in May 1861. As her carriage rolled by, a little girl tried to toss a tiny bouquet to her, but the flowers missed the carriage and fell on the roadside. Varina, the Confederacy's First Lady, had the carriage—and those fol-

lowing it—stopped while the flowers were picked up and brought to her and she waved her thanks to the little girl. Varina said she got "great pleasure in seeing sadness or disappointment on a child's face change to a happy smile." She undoubtedly saw such that day.

At the time the capital of the Confederacy was moved from Montgomery to Richmond—and the First Family along with it—Varina and Jefferson Davis had been married sixteen years. During the first seven of those years the couple produced no children, which was a constant and very deep concern to Varina, who was the second child in a family with eleven children and who wanted many children of her own—all of which may have contributed to her great happiness when the babies did start coming. Jefferson, too, was delighted. The last of his parents' ten children, he shared his wife's satisfaction in parenthood. The Davises' first child, Sam, who, wrote Varina, "made his father almost dance with the joy of fatherhood," became sick a short time before his second birthday with some mysterious disease of which the doctors knew nothing, and, after three weeks spent in desperate efforts to save him, died in June 1854. It was a terrible time for the Davises. Varina could "violently weep," but Jefferson was "too rigidly self-controlled" to do that. For a long time, Varina wrote, "he walked half the night, and worked fiercely all day. A child's cry in the street well-nigh drove him mad." Only the fact that another baby was on the way sustained the couple.

Varina's second baby, a girl they named Margaret, was born on February 25, 1855; she was a great comfort to her parents, who called her "Maggie." On January 16, 1857, Jefferson Davis, Jr., arrived. He was described a few weeks later by his mother: "Jeffy! He's the sweetest little thing you ever saw and good as gold." Then, on April 18, 1859, Joseph, "Dear, sweet little Joe," was born. "My little Joey seems blessed to me," said Varina. William, "Wonderful little Billy," arrived on December 16, 1861, on the top floor of the White House in Richmond.

These were the four Davis children who warmly welcomed Jim Limber into their number in February 1864. The newcomer could tell the Davises nothing about himself except his name, but Jefferson Davis, through an investigation, found out that he was a "little orphan free Negro boy." The President, Varina said, "went to the Mayor's office and had 'free' papers for the child registered to insure Jim against getting into the power of the oppressor again." Jim Limber was a "true member" of the Davis household and every member of the family loved him. Further, one of the household servants had "made herself a second mother to him."

A number of children living in Richmond during the war years long afterwards remembered the Confederate White House as "a wonderful home to visit." In addition to the Davis children, there were always some—sometimes many—of Varina's and Jefferson's young relatives in residence. Varina was a rather lax disciplinarian; she did so want the children to have fun. She had a few rules they had to follow, but they were just simple, basic rules of good behavior. The President was no disciplinarian at all! Once, after little Maggie, then very young, bothered the family dog, he snapped at her and gave her a hard pinch with his teeth, after which she lay down on the floor beside him until he was asleep, and then bit him hard on the nose! Varina reprimanded her, to which she replied, "I wish I could see my father; he would let me be bad." Varina, much later, told Jefferson about the incident, and "the time Maggie bit the dog" became his favorite of the many tales he told about his children.

Some of the Richmond children recalled that Varina was a wonderful storyteller and a delightful leader of old folksongs that required the singers to make animal noises—barks, meows, screeches, moos, and baas. Jim Limber was a "champion screecher." A few days after Jim moved to the White House a Richmond youth, thinking he was "mildly teasing" the boy, called him "Jim Limber Davis," but Jim wasn't teased at all—he liked being called that! There was no real teasing or mistreatment of Jim Limber—Jeff and Joe saw to that! Maggie, too, was very protective of Jim. She made it quite plain to the little girls who came to visit her that she was as fond of Jim as the boys were, and that they'd better be kind and friendly to him. They were. Jim and Joe, Joe whom Varina described as a "sweet, thoughtful, considerate son, so much like his father," were particularly close playmates. They were always side-by-side at family picnics, parties, prayer periods, and "Sunday afternoons."

The President and his wife, as busy as they both were, tried to reserve Sunday afternoons for a time they could rest quietly in their beautiful terraced fruit-and-flower garden and watch the children play. Jefferson was a bit disturbed that the boys had as their favorite game one they called "Killin' Yankees," in which they set up all sorts of objects to represent Yankees and hurled rocks and a variety of other "bullets" at them; but Varina was not bothered. As she pointed out, Confederate officers and couriers were going in and out of the White House daily, and even the servants and the Richmond children talked about battles and the like; she had not tried to shield them from the basic facts of the war, which was as it should be, and it was only natural that they should play at killing Yankees.

Soon after coming to the White House, Jim Limber became a member of the "Hill Cats," a small group of youngsters whose homes were fine houses on the hill which sloped down from the White House. At the foot of the hill were far more modest homes in which lived the "Butcher Cats." The Hill Cats and the Butcher Cats occasionally engaged in warfare, which, once or twice, resulted in bloodshed. One day Jim Limber, like Jeff and Joe, came in with a bloody face; Jim's also bore a wonderfully proud, happy smile. Varina said later that Hill Cat Jim had quite obviously helped his buddies win the battle. She "forgot" to tell Jefferson about the children's bloody fight. Varina had pictures taken of all the children, and Jim Limber's, which now is the property of the Confederate Museum in Richmond, shows an attractive, rather delicate face with a serious expression, but Jim was "usually all smiles" at the Davis home.

In the spring of 1864, Varina, worried because Jefferson was troubled and depressed about war news and was not sleeping well or eating properly, started carrying a nourishing lunch to his office each day and refusing to leave until he stopped work and ate it. On April 30, she left the boys—Maggie was on an outing with Mrs. Chесnutt—in the care of Catherine, the family's Irish nurse, and went as usual to Jefferson's office. About ten minutes after she arrived, one of the servants rushed in crying that Joe had climbed up on the gallery railing, slipped, and fallen to the brick walkway below; he had hit his head and was unconscious. "Sweet, dear, affectionate little Joey" died without regaining consciousness two or three minutes after his frantically distressed parents reached his side. The nurse Catherine lay on the walkway beside him. A neighbor who arrived on the scene said Jeff sobbed to her, "I have said all the prayers I know, but God will not wake Joe."

Varina wrote later that she and Jefferson were "in a terrible shock, paralyzed by the blow." But, she said, she still went on "in something of a daze." Maggie arrived home and began screaming, and Varina, who was far along in another pregnancy, "came back to reality." She stayed very busy as she comforted Jefferson, Maggie, Jeff, Billy, and Jim Limber through the painful days following Joe's death, even though she herself was "still in something of a daze at times." Jim Limber, who now "stayed close to Jeff, and the two seemed to gradually get strength from each other," was with the Davises at Joe's funeral and burial. He grieved with them, cried with them, and prayed with them.

The President, fortunately, *had* to think of things other than his son's death. Right after Joe's funeral, Sherman started his march to

Atlanta, Grant crossed the Rapidan River in his northern Virginia campaign, and Butler sailed up the James toward Richmond. (As it turned out, the last need not have been a serious concern to the President, but of course he could not know that.)

One morning after Jefferson, on his way to the field, where a desperate attempt was being made to hold back Sherman's raiders, rushed into the White House to get his pistols, Varina told the children, including two-year-old Billy, to kneel with her and pray. They all knelt, but then seven-year-old Jeff and five-year-old Jim Limber jumped up. Jeff said, "Please, mother, have my pony saddled and let me go out to help father; we can pray later." Jim nodded and grabbed Jeff's hand—he was going, too! Varina tried hard not to sob as she held the three boys and Maggie close to her bosom, but didn't quite make it.

On June 27, 1864, the Davises' sixth and last baby, Varina Anne Davis, later to become known as the "Daughter of the Confederacy," was born in a second-floor bedroom of the White House. She was promptly nicknamed "Piecake," which was later changed to "Winnie." Varina wrote Mary Chesnut: "I must brag a little about my baby. Piecake is so soft, so good, and so very lady-like...She is white as a lily, and has such exquisite hands and feet, and such bright blue eyes." Varina and Jefferson, Maggie and the three boys were "all in a sad and anxious state now," but Piecake was bringing a bit of cheer to every one. Jim Limber was, of course, one of the "three boys."

During the next eight months, as the Confederacy fell apart and the Davises met one problem right after another, including the severe financial stress prevalent throughout Richmond, Jim Limber retained his status as a full family member. That is well evidenced by the many references to him in letters written by the Davises to friends and relatives. They wrote of him matter-of-factly, but fondly, as one of "our great gang of children." Included in a letter ten-year-old Maggie wrote to her brother Jeff on March 11, 1865, while Jeff was on a several-days' trip in the company of his cousin, Brigadier General Joseph R. Davis, to visit soldiers in the trenches, was "Jim Limber sends his love to you."

Christmas of 1864 brought Varina a particularly difficult problem: How could she provide presents for the children? Then, she wrote many years later, before she had even begun to solve that, "like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky came the information that the orphans at the Episcopalian Home had been promised a Christmas tree, and toys, candy, and cake must be provided for them." She, with her usual courageous spirit and with the support of the

boys and Maggie—"even Piecake brightly smiled her approval"—and of her sister Maggie Howell, who was then living with the Davis-es, "dug in to accomplish the impossible." Broken toys were collected "from everywhere" to be repaired. Maggie Howell and about twenty young men and women she knew gathered around tables in the White House drawing room and, while some worked at fixing up old items as the children brought them in, others made paper cornucopias and pasted pretty little pictures around them. These cornucopias were later used to hold tiny squares of homemade candy wrapped in papers bearing such simple sentiments as "Roses are red, violets blue, sugar is sweet and so are you." A neighbor who melted wax and made wee Christmas-tree candles recalled years later that the day she took them to the White House, "Jim Limber was busy as a bee and happy as a lark."

Varina wrote that the young workers in the drawing room "furnished some small drooping toy feathered chickens and parrots with bright new tail feathers, supplied lambs minus much of their wool with a cotton substitute, and plumped out and recovered rag dolls with clean cloth; and the young ladies painted the dolls' fat faces in bright colors and furnished them with beads for eyes." The Davis children made long strings of popcorn and tied string loops to red apples so they could be hung on the tree.

The tree was set up in the basement of St. Paul's Church, decorated, and gifts were piled beneath it. On Christmas evening, the orphans were brought to the church; they were awed by the tree's "grandeur" and delighted with their presents. The Davis children, Maggie Howell and her friends, and Varina "immensely enjoyed the orphans' party." That morning the Davis children had been very pleased to find homemade toys in their stockings. Varina had even managed to come up with a small gift for each of the servants, as well as a small serving of eggnog—that because the stable boy had told her he and the others didn't know how they were going to get along without at least "a little wineglass of eggnog." For Jim Limber, it was by far the greatest Christmas he'd ever had; sad to think, it probably was the only nice Christmas he'd ever have.

In the latter part of March 1865, Jefferson told Varina she would have to flee South with the children. No, he could not, would not, allow her to stay with him; she must, he said, "take care of our babies." If he lived, he added, they could come to him "when the struggle ends." Following his instructions for the journey, she packed little except bedding and clothing, leaving all her beloved household treasures to fall into enemy hands. "Jefferson," she wrote in her *Memoir*,

"gave me a pistol and showed me how to load, aim, and fire it." There was no decision as to where she and the children should go. Jefferson told her, if she could not find a place she felt was safe, to "make for the Florida coast and take a ship for a foreign country."

"With hearts bowed down by despair," she recalled, "we left Richmond by train about ten o'clock in the evening." With Varina were Jeff, Maggie, Billy, Winnie, Jim Limber, Maggie Howell, several servants, including Ellen the maid and James Jones the coachman, and the two young daughters of Confederate Secretary of the Treasury George A. Trenholm; Trenholm had put the girls in Varina's care to get them safely on their way to South Carolina. Jefferson had sent Burton Harrison, his secretary, along to escort the party as far as Charlotte, North Carolina. The train had only three cars, one of which carried Varina's carriage horses.

The train had not gone far before "the worn-out engine gave out on a grade, and there we sat all night." It rained, the baggage car leaked, and all their bedding was soaked. The next day the engineer got the train started, and they finally, two days later, reached Charlotte. Varina sent mail, including messages from all the children, back to Jefferson by Harrison. Most people in Charlotte, in fear of being punished by the Yankees, did not come forward to help the refugees, but, fortunately, Varina had an old, faithful friend there who sent food for them all, and another who found them an old house to rest in a few days. Then they struggled on southward. During the forty days after they left Richmond they traveled about 500 miles—by train, in an ambulance wagon pulled by Varina's horses, and on foot.

Varina remembered, "I walked five miles in the darkness in mud over my shoe tops with my cheerful little baby in my arms, and the other children trudging alongside." At many stops kind friends gave them food and provided sleeping quarters, but at many others they could find no help at all. Acquiring food was the biggest problem; at one time Varina had to pay a dollar each for the children to have a glass of milk and one biscuit, at another a dollar for each glass of milk alone. The group slept several times on church floors and many times in abandoned buildings. "We finally reached Abbeville, South Carolina, all more dead than alive," she wrote. There the party received a "wonderfully heartfelt welcome....The people urged me with tears in their eyes to share with them the little that they had." Particularly did everyone generously supply the needs of the children. The travelers decided to halt for a short time in Abbeville before continuing southward. Twice after that they, very frightened, had to hide from Yankee raiders.

During all this traveling period Varina was able to keep up a correspondence with Jefferson; Confederate officers carried their messages back and forth. The messages were in part love letters; in addition, Jefferson wrote her of the problems of the dying Confederacy and she wrote him details about the children—except that she played down the extent of the difficulties they were all having. The children missed him very much, but they were all well and getting along all right; Piecake was still "the sweetest little thing in the world," and Jeff, Billy and Jim Limber were "fast friends as ever." In late April she wrote from Abbeville that Maggie sent him "a thousand loves" and "Jim Limber is thriving, but bad."

Jefferson Davis left Richmond, accompanied by members of his staff, just hours before the city was occupied by Union forces. He forged southward, trying to catch up with his family, and he and the six men still with him did join the family at their tent camp near Milledgeville, Georgia. "When we heard Jefferson's voice calling to us," wrote Varina, "we thought it was the most beautiful sound in the world." Jefferson traveled on with them, sometimes a few miles ahead, for a few days. Then, on May 10, all the party were captured by Union cavalry near Irwinville, in southern Georgia.

The Davises and Jim Limber were taken to Macon and, after one night, on to Port Royal, outside Savannah. "Of the horrors and sufferings of the journey it is impossible to speak," Varina said soon thereafter. Before reaching Macon, a member of their Union escort, Captain Charles T. Hudson, "an extremely rude and offensive man, certainly no military gentleman, threatened to take Jim Limber away from us... and keep him as his own," but Varina kept the children from knowing anything about the threats. On reaching Port Royal, the Davises sent an appeal to an old and trusted friend there, United States General Rufus Saxton, to take charge of Jim, lest Hudson get his hands on the boy. That did not work out, probably because there was no time.

Captain Hudson and other Union officers did roughly take the boy. When Jim Limber learned he was to be separated from "his family," he protested wildly; he clung to the Davis boys and they to him; and he "fought like a little tiger" as he was forcibly removed by the Union men. The Davis children, sobbing uncontrollably, had their last sight of him as he struggled and screamed to get back to them. The Davises were told only that Jim would be "sent back to Washington."

During the Davises' following painful, troubled-filled months and years, they were unable to learn what had happened to Jim Limber. There were mentions of him in Northern newspapers, but all were

false. One said the boy was "one of Jefferson Davis' poor slaves" who would take to his grave the scars from beatings by the Davises. Varina said she was sure that Jim Limber had explained to the Northerners that the scars were from beatings from which she had rescued him, "for the affection was mutual between us, and we had never punished him."

In the decades following the War, after Jefferson was released from prison and the Davises were settled, they tried many times in several different ways to locate Jim, but failed. They were still trying in 1890; that year Varina wrote that the family still prayed for him, and talked often about him, always hoping the man "lovable little Jim Limber had grown into has been successful in the world." ☆

**The Plundering Generation**  
*Ludwell H. Johnson*

1988

A few years ago I was shuffling through accumulated litter in my garage attic when I came across some clippings dating from the 1960s. Among them were several letters to *Life* magazine commenting on an article by Bruce Catton. One reads as follows:

Bruce Catton's article is interesting and well written, but it is amazing a person of the distinguished author's perspicacity would write "we find it impossible to say: these men were right and those men were wrong."

In the Civil War, more nearly than in any other war in all history, the Right was on one side and the Wrong was on the other. The unvarnished truth is that the Confederate Army was fighting to destroy the Union and to perpetuate human slavery, while the Union Army was fighting to preserve the Union "with liberty and justice for all."

—Daniel L. Marsh Chancellor, Boston University

One cannot decide whether to laugh or cry. Henry Wilson, Horace Greeley, "Black Jack" Logan, and all the others who wrote about the Slave Power plot have long ago gone to their reward, but in Boston the melody lingers on. Dr. Marsh, like those others, had no doubt about the cause of the war: it was slavery.

This introduces a perennial favorite of compilers of books of readings, "The Causes of the Civil War." Year after year earnest college instructors propound that problem to glassy-eyed undergraduates. At higher academic echelons, the big brains in the history business continue their attempts to unravel the tangled web of causality. Scarcely a year goes by when some new theory is not unveiled, although when closely examined the theories are not always very new, but rather old arguments dressed up in the latest methodological style.

Styles are of course very important in historiography. Slavery as the cause of the war was for many years the only acceptable explanation above the Mason-Dixon line. Then in the early twentieth century it went into partial eclipse when historians discovered economics, and the Beards said that the war was basically a revolution of rising capitalists against the political power of the agrarian South. In the wake of the First World War the revisionist school appeared. These scholars decided that war was neither inevitable nor constructive in its results; they blamed fanatical abolitionists, inept

statesmen, and a defective political system for the bloodbath of the 1860s. But then along came Hitler and World War II, which seemed to teach us that after all war was sometimes inevitable, or at least indispensable, and that it could have constructive results. This view, as applied to the War Between the States, was reinforced by the rise of the civil rights movement in the 1950s, with the consequent rehabilitation of slavery as a cause of the Civil War and racial justice as its purpose. It now appeared that, though bloody, the war was worth the price because it had paved the way for equal rights, a deferred commitment of the wartime generation that now could be realized. Then, however, along came the Northern race riots of the 1960s, which, together with the new research, showed that racial problems were not and never had been the exclusive possession of the South. Simultaneously the nation was sinking deeply into what many regarded as an unnecessary and unjust war in Vietnam. So some despondent scholars once again began to ask if the Civil War after all had been worth the price, since it had produced neither racial justice at home nor righteous behavior abroad. For example, one young historian, depressed by the country's failure to achieve equal rights for blacks, concluded that the beneficial results of the war did not justify the cost—a position known as "the new revisionism." But, he said, this might not always be the case: "If significant gains are made by Negroes, and those gains are seen as dependent upon emancipation in 1865, then perhaps the sacrifices of war should be regarded as justified." So today the war wasn't worth it, but maybe tomorrow it will be. Now you see it, now you don't.

As things stand, historians not only see the causes of the war as so complex as to defy analysis, but they are troubled by the question of whether the war really accomplished anything worthwhile. They have got just what they deserve: they are trapped in the prison of their own presentism. They are victims of the "Whig interpretation" of history, which holds that particular events in the past can be identified as causes of particular results in the present. The moralism and relativism implicit in the Whig view means that the past—history—becomes a selection of those events presumed to be most important to the present, and since the present is always changing, history is always changing, not because what happened in the past has changed, but because the Whig historian has given his kaleidoscope another turn. No wonder that Kenneth Stampp in the introduction to his book of readings, *The Causes of the Civil War*, wrote: "As one reflects upon the problem of causation one is driven to the conclusion that historians will never know, objectively and with mathematical

precision, what caused the Civil War." One of my undergraduate students said the same thing much more concisely. Once when I was looking for a final exam that would be a real grabber, I came up with a three-hour question in four words: "Why the Civil War?" But when I got back from one student a two-word answer, "Why not?" I began to suspect, like Stampp, that I might be asking the wrong question.

I suggest that if we want to understand the war, we should do better to stop asking why the war came and concentrate on what it was about; that we move from the realm of abstraction to the domain of fact. The best way to find out what the war was about is to look at what was done. After investigating the war in a modest way and thinking about it for a number of years, I have been driven to the conclusion that to a depressing degree this was a war of economic and political aggrandizement begun and carried out by the ruling party in the North. The people who engineered the armed conquest of the South knew exactly what they wanted and they were not at all particular about how they got it. They were no congregation of humanitarians with their gaze unwaveringly fixed on some ultimate good, the prophets of a purified society with racial equality and justice for all. The late great historian James G. Randall called the men who presided over the coming of the war "the Blundering Generation," but as I see it there was a great deal more plundering than blundering.

This is not a popular point of view, and one espouses it at the risk (or certainty, rather) of being labeled a "neo-Confederate." Boiled down to its essentials, being a neo-Confederate means refusing to admit that, however flawed, the Northern cause was still, as Chancellor Marsh of Boston University said, the cause of Right, and the Confederacy the champion of human Wrong.

In a brief essay such as this it is impossible to bring to bear all the voluminous evidence that supports my contention as to the essential nature of the war. The best I can do is to hit a few high spots. Many of the things I mention are not new, but old, familiar, inconvenient events have a way of getting lost or glossed over or as incidentals of little significance.

There are some large, intractable facts that need to be resurrected if we are to understand what this war was about. For example, in the textbooks and elsewhere it is rarely if ever noticed that the war after all consisted of the conquest and subjugation of the South by Northern armies. Instead, the war is often described as an attempt by the South to "destroy the Union," which makes as much sense as saying that the secession of the American colonies in the 1770s was an attempt to destroy the British empire.

The Republicans had for years been castigating Southerners as moral lepers, tools of the Slave Power's plot to take over the country, as being the main obstacles to progress and prosperity, even to the coming of the Millennium. One would think they would have breathed a sigh of relief when the South left the Union. But of course they did not: they went to war rather than let the South go. Presumably the people controlling Northern policy (Lincoln and his party) had some solid reasons for so doing, and in fact Northern leaders were quite candid on this point—candid in explaining what they believed they would lose should the South go free. Manufacturers feared the loss of American markets to a flood of cheap British goods pouring through a free-trade Confederacy; Northern shippers feared the loss of their monopoly of the coasting trade and their share of the trans-Atlantic carrying trade; merchants feared the loss of the profits they garnered as middlemen between the South and Europe; creditors feared the loss of Southern debts; the Old Northwest feared the loss or curtailment of the Mississippi trade; the Republicans feared the disintegration of their party should it let the South go and bring upon the North all of the consequences just mentioned. The list of reasons for keeping the South in the Union could be extended, but this will do for purposes of illustration.

Another large fact that tells something of what the war was about was the legislative program carried through by the Republicans once Southern Congressmen had departed and left them in control. Policies long thwarted by the South now at last were realized. The tariffs here began the upward swing that would enthrone protection for generations to come and produce a massive transfer of wealth from agriculture to industry; here began a new financial system that would make Eastern bankers for years the financial overlords of the rest of the country; here began the giveaway of the public domain to special interests; here began the great days of pork barrel politics that would, along with emancipation, the spoils system, and military force, help the Republican Party to achieve its number one objective: keeping itself in office, which, except for two brief interludes, it succeeded in doing until the 1930s.

Another thing to look at is how the North made money out of the war itself, not only in the South but at home. First, take some major legislation passed by the Republican-controlled Congress, laws that confirmed Southerners in their belief that the main objective of the North was to rob them. Early in the war it was observed that every Republican congressman seemed to have a confiscation bill in his pocket, for the avowed purpose of punishing the South and making it

pay the costs of the war (Northern costs) by taking Southern property. A variety of practical difficulties that need not be investigated here rendered the Confiscation Acts of 1861 and 1862 relatively ineffective. (Of course there was a great deal of confiscation of property by Union armies on the grounds of military necessity, and perhaps an even greater amount of individual thievery that had nothing at all to do with the Confiscation Acts.)

But if those laws were ineffectual, there was more than one way to skin a rebel. Take the act of June 7, 1862, for the collection of direct taxes in the insurrectionary states, a law which created tax commissioners who would follow in the track of Union armies and auction off farms and plantations on which the tax had not been paid by the owners because they had fled before the invading Federals. Advance information of such actions was used by speculators with the right connections or a long purse to buy up valuable real estate for a fraction of its actual value. A Connecticut soldier wrote home complaining of the activities of what he called these "northern sharpers." Millions of dollars worth of Southern property was alienated in this way, and some of those who profited were men noted for their humanitarian and antislavery sentiments.

And then there were those who believed that laws were an unnecessary impediment, who said that the rebels, merely by being rebels, had forfeited all title to their lands. Let us, they said, redeem the South, fill it up with an enlightened population, make it over in the image of New England, and the profits will roll in. Eli Thayer, who had tried to do this in Kansas and in the upper South before the war, wanted to try again in Florida. Thousands of troops were enlisted in the Northeast by the political general Nathaniel Banks to occupy Texas and get rich growing cotton. What was even better, such lucrative enterprises were depicted as a religious duty. Part of trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath were stored was to steal the vineyard. The South was seen as a holy eldorado, fit reward for the righteous. In this connection, it may not be out of place to mention the series of orders issued by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton turning over Southern churches to Northern clergy, who urgently sought and eagerly accepted these spoils of the crusade.

Far more sweeping than the Confiscation Acts or even the Direct Tax Act was the Captured and Abandoned Property Act of March 1863, under which millions of dollars worth of cotton was summarily sequestered, and farms and plantations seized, many to be operated by Northern speculators employing the ex-slaves, who were often kept at work by the Union army. About 95 percent of the property "cap-

tured" under this law was cotton, and the law provided a cover for the theft of still more by army, navy, and treasury officials as well as by private speculators. The Union navy employed a more forthright kind of confiscation. Gunboats ranged the Mississippi and its tributaries, scouring the countryside for cotton with captured teams and wagons, then sending the spoils to Federal courts as prizes of war.

Much more cotton was acquired at bargain prices by trading through the military lines. Under acts of Congress imaginatively executed by the Lincoln administration, a huge trade sprang up in food, ammunition, weapons, shoes, blankets, and other things needed by the Confederate army. Men of the first rank engaged in this traffic: congressmen, governors, generals, diplomatic officials, and newspaper editors, not to mention swarms of small-fry. A tide of commerce surged through the military frontier from the Rio Grande to the Chesapeake Bay. In fact this trade began even before the war, but in anticipation of hostilities. After the organization of the Confederate government, Jefferson Davis sent Raphael Semmes north to buy munitions. The future Confederate admiral toured New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, where he was warmly received:

I found people everywhere not only willing but anxious to contract with me. I purchased large quantities of percussion caps in the city of New York and sent them by express to Montgomery. I made contracts for batteries of light artillery, powder, and other munitions, and succeeded in getting large quantities of powder shipped...I made a contract...for a complete set of machinery for rifling cannon, [together with] the skilled workmen to put it in operation. Some of these men. . . occupied high social positions and were men of wealth [who] afterward obtained lucrative contracts from the Federal government and became, in consequence, intensely loyal.

In the meantime, the Confederate state department was receiving numerous requests from ship owners in Boston and other New England ports asking for letters of marque so that they might send out privateers to prey upon Northern shipping when the war began. This sketch has perhaps suggested some of the ways that Southern wealth was transmuted into Northern profits. Of course, it was often not necessary to go South to make money; the war had opened up numberless opportunities for enterprising men who could stay at home and make a bundle. In 1862 Edward A. Pollard wrote in his *Southern History of the War* that:

the realization of the war in the North was, in many respects, nothing more

than that of an immense money job. The large money expenditure at Washington supplied a vast fund of corruption; it enriched the commercial centres of the North...it interested vast numbers of politicians, contractors, and disolute public men in continuing the war and enlarging the scale of its operations; and, indeed, the disposition to make money out of the war accounts for much of that zeal in the North, which was mistaken for political ardor or the temper of patriotic devotion.

Pollard was of course delivering a very partisan opinion, but knowledgeable Northerners were saying much the same thing. Henry S. Olcott, special investigator for the War and Navy Departments, wrote an article in 1878 entitled "The War's Carnival of Fraud." After detailing some of his experiences, he concluded: "It is my deliberate conviction, based upon the inspection of many bureaus, and the examination of...thousands of witnesses, in every walk of life, that at least twenty, if not twenty-five, percent of the entire expenditures of the government during the Rebellion, were tainted with fraud." And years later, the historian Fred Shannon estimated that of the money paid out in army contracts, 50 percent was clear profit.

Of course, profiteering and fraud have accompanied all our wars, but the striking thing about these practices in the 1860s was their pervasiveness; they were so pervasive that they seemed to be of the very essence of the Northern war effort. Furthermore, these practices were put into operation with a quickness, skill, and efficiency that strongly suggest a long-standing and settled way of doing business, a code of behavior followed by a remarkable number of entrepreneurs and politicians whose great aim in life was to make money, and who saw the war as a heaven-sent opportunity to do so on an unprecedented scale. This calls to mind some of Alexis de Tocqueville's more pungent observations on American life in the 1830s, when entrepreneurialism was beginning to hit full stride. He wrote of the "the commercial fervour which seems to devour the whole of society, the thirst for gain, the respect for money, and the bad faith in business which appears on every side...If the number of passions seem restricted here, it is because they have all been absorbed in just one: the love of wealth." In comparing the typical Kentuckian with the typical Ohioan, he said of the latter that he regards "temporal prosperity as the principal aim of his existence; and as the country which he occupies presents inexhaustible resources to his industry and ever-varying lures to his activity, his acquisitive ardor surpasses the ordinary limits of human cupidity; he is tormented by the desire of wealth;...the resources of his intelligence are astonishing and his avidity in the pur-

suit of gain amounts to a species of heroism."

The all-consuming passion for wealth that so impressed Tocqueville was characteristic of an entrepreneurial society in a rich country that was finding the means of exploiting its great natural resources, and it goes far to explain why so many people high and low regarded the war primarily as a money-making proposition. There is not time to enter upon a doleful recitation of the endless tale of fraud, corruption, profiteering, and near-treason in the North, of the foisting on the troops of guns that would not shoot, food that was inedible, clothes that fell apart, and so forth—even though it is a story that tells a great deal about the nature of the war.

But this sort of thing is not the whole story. A rather grim anecdote may illustrate the point. It was related by an ex-Confederate whose home was near Fredericksburg. He wrote:

In 1865-1866 some shrewd Yankee contractors obtained government sanction to disinter all the Federal dead on the battlefields of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House. They were paid per capita...I found the contractor provided with unpainted boxes of common pine about six feet long and twelve inches wide; but I soon saw this scoundrel was dividing the remains so as to make as much by his contract as possible. I at once reported what I had seen to Col. E. V. Sumner, Jr....He was utterly shocked at this vandalism. I afterward heard that the contract was...given to more reliable parties.

This vignette was more than just another example of sordid quest for profits even at the expense of the dead. The men whose bones were divided by the enterprising contractors had made fourteen separate assaults on the impregnable position at Marye's Hill. They did not look death in the face and still march on to their fate because they were out to make a buck. There was no margin of profit for them. The Georgians behind the stone wall were not guarding any treasure trove.

Nevertheless, there were riches on that field. Refine away all the war's impurities—the greed and trickery, the cheating and faithlessness—and there remains an irreducible core of pure gold: the courage of Northern soldiers who gave themselves to battle and to death because of duty. Men such as these earned with blood the profound respect of their indomitable Confederate antagonists, who would want us to remember them. All of them, Yanks and Rebs alike, died for the sins of the plundering generation. ☆

**The Dark Side of Abraham Lincoln**  
*Tom Landess***1985**

By way of prologue, let me say that all of us like the Lincoln whose face appears on the penny. He is the Lincoln of myth: kindly, humble, a man of sorrows who believes in malice toward none and charity toward all, who simply wants to preserve the Union so that we can all live together as one people. The Lincoln on the penny, had he lived, would have spared the South the ravages of Reconstruction and ushered in the Era of Good Feeling in 1865. The fact that this mythic Lincoln was killed is surely the ultimate tragedy in a tragic era. Indeed the most that any Southerner could say in behalf of the slayer of that Lincoln was what Sheldon Vanauken reported hearing from an old-fashioned Virginian: "Young Booth, sah, acting out of the best of motives, made a tragic blunder." But the Lincoln on the penny, the mythic Lincoln, did not exist. Instead a very real man, a political absolutist with enormous human weaknesses, for a time held the destiny of the nation in his oversized palm. So why do we dislike this Lincoln so much? There are many reasons, and here, just for starters, are three good ones:

*I. Lincoln was the inventor of a new concept of "Union," one that implied a strong centralized government and an "imperial presidency," a Union that now dominates virtually every important aspect of our corporate life as Americans.*

This Union did not come about accidentally. Lincoln created it out of his own imagination and then invented a rhetoric to justify it, a grammar that has been used ever since that time. You must realize that before the War Between the States, virtually all Americans believed that the nation was a loosely connected alliance of political states, each with a sovereign will of its own and a right to resist the power of central government, which, since the beginning of the Republic, was regarded as the ultimate enemy.

"Keep it small, keep it diversified" was the view of federal authority held by the Founding Fathers; but Lincoln believed—and said in the Gettysburg Address—that the Founding Fathers were wrong, that they had imperfectly conceived the nation at the outset and that he, Abraham Lincoln, had a responsibility to refound it, to bring about a "new birth." What he meant by this "new birth" was the emergence of a strong, centralized government which had the will and the power to impose a certain conformity on its membership.

If you want to know where the idea of Big Government came from in this country, it came from Lincoln.

In addition to a strong central government, the Founding Fathers also feared a chief executive who exercised absolute power. The tyrant was the ultimate villain in an increasingly diversified political order, and we must remember that, as a matter of strategy, the Declaration of Independence denounced the sins of George III rather than those of his duly elected Parliament despite the fact that the poor king was considerably less responsible than the people's representatives. Indeed, it was only later, in 1861, that Abraham Lincoln finally became the imperial ruler that Thomas Jefferson denounced in the body of the Declaration.

It is also important to recall that the Constitution in Article I invests Congress with the authority "To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence..."; "To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Capture on Land and Water"; "To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years"; "To provide and maintain a Navy"; "To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions"; "To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;" etc.

All these responsibilities are conveyed to Congress in Section 8, with a catch-all clause enabling legislators to pass laws implementing "the foregoing Powers." Then in Section 9, certain prohibitions are outlined which clearly qualify the powers of Congress. These include a prohibition against the suspension of *habeas corpus*, except in "Cases of Rebellion or Invasion" and against withdrawal of funds from the Treasury except "in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law." These qualifications, included in that portion of the Constitution dealing with Congress, are careful limitations imposed on the most powerful of the three branches by a cautious band of Framers. In effect they told Congress not only what they and only they could do, but they also said what they (and by implication everyone else) could not do. The caution which they here exercised becomes downright fastidiousness when they get to Article II, which specifies the duties of the President. He is, to be sure, defined as "Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, and of the Militia of the several States,"

*but only after Congress has called them up, as permitted in Article I.* After this quasi-military role, the President has precious little left to his disposal. He can require reports from members of the Executive Branch, he can grant pardons, he can make treaties which are valid only if two-thirds of the Senate agree, and he can make various appointments, again with the "Advice and Consent of the Senate."

And that's really about it. One reading of the Constitution reveals the degree to which the Framers wished to restrict the powers of the presidency to a ceremonial minimum. Yet Abraham Lincoln, in his attempts to refound the Republic, completely transformed the nature of his office, appropriating to it not only powers specifically and exclusively granted to Congress but also some powers forbidden to any branch of the federal government.

First, he called up state militias on his own authority, despite the fact that no one had fired a shot or indeed intended to. To cloak these actions, he warned of an impending invasion that the South had no intention of launching and summarily began the War, despite the fact that Congress had no immediate intention of exercising its exclusive authority in this area. Lincoln also authorized recruitment of troops and the expenditure of millions of dollars—all power specifically delegated to Congress. In order to take such action with impunity he had to silence those voices who spoke in favor of the Constitution; so he suspended the right of *habeas corpus* and imprisoned hordes of his political enemies—according to several authorities *almost 40,000 people*. These political prisoners were not charged. They were not tried. They were simply incarcerated and held *incommunicado*. In some instances their closest family members did not know if they were alive or dead until the end of the War.

Among these, incidentally, were a number of newspaper editors, particularly those from such states as Kentucky and Maryland, where Southern sentiment ran high. In addition to the imprisonment of these outspoken critics, their presses were wrecked and their places of business destroyed. All in all, over 300 newspapers and journals were shut down by executive order. In an age when casual criticism of the press by the White House is often regarded as a threat to the First Amendment, it is odd that Lincoln still receives such ritual respect. No president in history held freedom of speech or freedom of the press in greater contempt.

In addition to these more obvious violations of Constitutional rights and prohibitions, Lincoln also created a state (West Virginia), imported foreign mercenaries to fight against people he still insisted were Americans, confiscated private property without due process,

printed paper money, and even dispersed assembled legislatures like some American Cromwell. In all these things he acted as no other president of the United States had ever acted before or has acted since.

*II. Lincoln's skillful use of egalitarian rhetoric has given Northern and New South historians the argument that the War Between the States was fought solely over the question of slavery rather than over a number of interrelated issues, none of which in itself could have led to Secession and War.*

In a sense the thing that contemporary Southerners most resent about Lincoln is the use that has been made of him by recent historians who want to find in the Antebellum South and the tragic events of the War a moral exemplum for the religion of equality. To be honest, Lincoln himself did not go nearly so far, though in his debates with Douglas and in the Emancipation Proclamation he clearly took the high moral ground in an effort to win pragmatic political advantage.

Lincoln himself was not an Abolitionist nor was he particularly sympathetic with black freedmen. He came from a state whose racist laws discouraged blacks from crossing its borders. If Illinois was opposed to the spread of slavery it was because the state's citizens were opposed to the spread of blacks. This much is a matter of public record. In addition Abraham Lincoln probably objected to the peculiar institution on philosophical grounds, as had Thomas Jefferson. On the other hand, both Jefferson and Lincoln were white supremacists of sorts, and the latter told ex-slaves in his last year as President that there was no place in America for free blacks, that repatriation in Africa was the only solution to the dilemma which emancipation would soon pose for both races.

Also, the Emancipation Proclamation was not, as most contemporary Americans now believe, a document which abolished slavery with the stroke of a pen. It did not, as a matter of policy, abolish slavery *at all* in those places under Lincoln's rule—whether in the five Union states which still permitted the institution or in Southern territory held by Union forces. It abolished slavery only in Confederate territory, and the Proclamation, by its own terms, did not go into effect if the Southern states chose to return to the fold before the effective date.

Of course Lincoln knew that the seceding states would not respond to such a proposal; but by issuing the Proclamation after the Battle of Sharpsburg he was able to send a message to Southern slaves who might be willing to rise against households without males

to defend them. Then, too, Lincoln was able thereafter to say that the North was fighting to abolish slavery, a goal he had specifically disavowed well into the first year of the War.

Now, of course, historians of a certain stripe are able to say that this was the true cause of the North from the beginning, forgetting the myriad considerations that preoccupied nineteenth-century Americans, including tariffs, the rise of a rapacious industrial economy, and the political principles of the day, which included a devotion to state more than nation and a fierce commitment to the ideal of self-determination.

Too many modern commentators want to ignore everything in this case but the moral imperative of the Abolitionist, content for this one time in history to say that principles were more important than economics. Thus are Southerners forever branded as oppressors, while Union slaves are swept under the convenient rug of historical oblivion.

Because Lincoln was a formidable rhetorician (the greatest of his age) and because it is a twentieth-century failing that we believe the past is inferior to the present, the statute of limitations will never run out on our "crimes." Fifty years after Massachusetts abolished slavery it was shaking an accusatory finger at Mississippi and Alabama. Fifty years after slavery had been abolished in these Southern states, Mississippians and Alabamians were still being called to account by the high caste Brahmins of Boston. And now that 120 years have passed, it is the politically prosperous grandsons of Irish immigrants who make the charges, descendants of the same brutal people who murdered literally hundreds of blacks in the draft riots of 1863.

It is Abraham Lincoln who invented this rhetoric; and we must either expose it for what it is or else continue to suffer the kind of abuse that manifests itself not only in anti-Southern cliches and stereotypes, but also in political exploitation and in such discriminatory legislation as the Voting Rights Acts of 1965 and gratuitous renewal in 1984. Those laws are bad not so much because of their severe provisions but because they assume that the integrated South deserves punitive treatment while the still-segregated North does not. And for that kind of moral abuse we can thank Abraham Lincoln.

*III. Lincoln was responsible for the War Between the States, a conflict in which more than 600,000 Americans were killed for no good purpose.*

The truth of this statement should be obvious to a contemporary society preoccupied with the idea of peaceful coexistence and obsessed with a word like "negotiation." The current President of the

United States is routinely criticized for taking no steps during his first term to meet with his counterpart in the Soviet Union. We are told that military confrontation is wicked, that disputes between conflicting political states should be solved through diplomatic means, that Concession is the child of Wisdom.

In 1861 Jefferson Davis made it quite clear in his resignation from the Senate and again in his inaugural address that all the Confederate States wanted was to be allowed to leave in peace. He stated this point explicitly and after so doing he took no action that would have indicated otherwise to the Union or to its president. No troops were called up. No extraordinary military appropriations requested. No belligerent rhetoric from Davis' office or from his Cabinet. The South feared invasion, but never threatened it—not even implicitly.

Why, then, did Lincoln call for 75,000 troops "to defend the Union"? Why did he begin immediate preparations for war? Why did he insist on dispatching troops to Fort Sumter when a majority of his Cabinet advised against such a rash move and when he knew that South Carolina and the Confederacy believed the fortress to be legally and Constitutionally theirs?

While Lincoln's dispatch of troops left South Carolinians no choice but to defend their soil against an invader, Lincoln had a number of options open to him other than military action. For example, he might first have brought the whole matter of secession before the Supreme Court, seeking some legal right to Fort Sumter and indeed to the entire Confederacy. But then there is good reason to believe the Court would have ruled that Southerners had every legal justification to leave the Union. Then war would have been illegal and Lincoln's incipient dream of a "refounding" would have gone a'glimmering.

A second choice would have been to refrain from ordering troops to relieve Fort Sumter and instead to have dispatched a diplomatic team to Montgomery, or better yet, gone himself for a "summit" with Davis. Given Lincoln's prowess in debate, his love of discourse, his persistent appeals to "reason," such a course of action would have seemed not only prudent but in keeping with the new president's character—decidedly Lincolnian.

Yet apparently such an idea never occurred to the man who had been so eager as a young man to engage in amateur forensics and still later to meet Stephen Douglas in public debate. Historians can give credible reasons why Lincoln did not take his case to the High Court, but their voices trail off in weak apology when they take up the question of diplomatic negotiations. It all boils down to the sup-

position that, for his own reasons, Abraham Lincoln felt the situation was beyond the hope of dialogue—though no one can say exactly why he believed such a proposition.

Lincoln's third choice—the most likely of all—was simply to do nothing, to wait until the South made some overt move and then to react accordingly. For the sake of more than 600,000 killed on the field of battle, one wishes that he had been just a little more circumspect, a little less sure of his own ability to read the minds of his opponents. Wait a month and see. Then another month. Then another. Surely the South would not have marched against the Union. Few believe that Davis would take such a drastic step. And all those young men would have grown old and wise—perhaps so wise that they would have found a way to reconcile their differences and to re-establish a Union they were born under. But, as I've already said, Lincoln did not approve of that Union. He wanted to found a new one. And the only way to accomplish such an end was to risk war.

Perhaps it never occurred to him that 600,000 men would die. Perhaps he was certain that the conflict would be brief and benign, a skirmish or two on the outskirts of Washington, over in the twinkling of an eye, with a few Union dead, a few Confederate dead, and everyone embracing after the show. But if that is what he believed, such an opinion constituted an inordinate pride in his own pre-science, one that we can only forgive by a supreme act of charity (provided, of course, that our forgiveness is solicited).

I will only add that despite his often quoted rhetoric of reconciliation, he instituted a policy of total war—the first in our history—and saw to it that his troops burned homes, destroyed crops, and confiscated property—all to make certain that civilians suffered the crudest deprivations. He also refused to send needed medical supplies to the South, even when that refusal meant depriving Union soldiers of medicines needed to recover from their wounds. And finally, in the last year of the War, when Davis sent emissaries to negotiate a peace on Lincoln's own terms, he ordered them out of Washington that the War might continue and the Republicans win re-election. As a result, 100,000 more troops were killed, North and South.

Because of Lincoln's policies the cemeteries of the nation were sown with 600,000 premature bodies, long turned to dust now, but in their time just as open to the promise of life as any young draft dodger of the 1960s. That they fought one another, willing to risk all for their countries, is something that Lincoln counted on. Indeed you might say he staked his political future on their sacred honor, and in so doing impressed his face forever on the American penny.

Sober, reflective, a little sad as you hold him in your upturned palm, he looks perpetually rightward, gazing out of the round perimeter of his copper world at an extra dimension of existence—a visionary even now. And he is as ubiquitous as the common housefly. If you toss him in a fountain or down a well he turns up in your pocket again, after the filling station attendant has added on the federal tax and taken your twenty-dollar bill.

He can purchase nothing now, because his own grandiose dreams of Union have finally rendered him impotent. Once five of him would buy a candy bar or a coke. Now it would take a couple of squads. Tomorrow a regiment. Yet in a way he is indispensable to us as a reminder that in the ruthless expansion of government our lives are diminished with each new acquisition of power, with each digit of inflation, however small; and that such a diminution is infinite; that today, 120 years after his death, there is no conceivable end to the enormity of government and the consequent paucity of our individual lives.

And this is why we don't like Abraham Lincoln. ☆

**Nathan Bedford Forrest and the Death of Heroes**  
*J. O. Tate*

1984

When in April of 1979 the Atlanta City Council and that city's mayor, Maynard Jackson, saw to it that "Forrest Ave." would from then on be known as "Ralph McGill Boulevard," they consummated a symbolical shell-game. Toying with proper nouns and race politics, they ignored the protests of local citizens (of both races) who wished to be let alone, and who asked that a familiar name remain unaltered.

Not satisfied with erasing the name "Forrest" from Atlanta's street-signs and directories, Councilman Morris Finley, who wrote the ordinance instituting the change, was quoted as saying, "I plan next week to begin an effort to have the title Bedford-Pine changed also, because Bedford was Gen. Forrest's middle name." Having achieved what a Quaker group had failed to accomplish eight years before, Finley and friends had seen to it that Forrest Avenue would no longer intersect with Bedford Place. Forrest, they all argued, "didn't deserve the honor." The local matter which put Wyche Fowler in mind of Orwell also disturbed Mr. Franklin Garrett, director of the Atlanta Historical Society; and for good reason.

Elsewhere (and earlier on, during the middle 70s, I believe) the "logo" or silhouette of Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, C.S.A., once the symbol of Middle Tennessee State University, disappeared. But I'm told that there's still a Forrest Park in Memphis, with an equestrian statue of the General mounted on King Philip, the most illustrious of his warhorses. Beneath that monument, General and Mrs. Forrest are buried. They are, I trust, undisturbed by the distortions of history which warp the contemporary mind.

*Those hoof beats die  
 not upon Fame's  
 Crimsoned Sod.  
 But will ring through  
 her song and her story.  
 He fought like a  
 titan and struck like  
 a god.  
 And his dust is  
 our ashes of glory.*

—Virginia Frazer Boyd

City governments obsessed with grandstanding ploys and universities devoted more to public relations than to historic identity were never the motivating concerns of Forrest's career. The shabby abstractions of Atlanta and the concrete realities of Forrest's life make for a dramatic and edifying comparison—one which shows part of what was lost with the War Between the States and which shows part of the cost of forgetting, or arranging to ignore, the image of the past.

The citizens of Rome, Georgia, in 1863, recognized Forrest for what he was: they greeted him with a hero's welcome, flowers, food, every hospitality, and the gift of a horse. Such an accolade leaves its mark. Inconveniently enough for politicians and educationists, the name "Forrest" is not going to evaporate so easily. The reason is clear, and two-fold: "Old Bedford" pursued a parabola of heroic individualism that's remarkable not only in the history of the Civil War, and in the history of this country, but also in the history of the world. Second, Forrest became a "legend in his own time" to such an extent that the legend has entered the annals of this historic record and Southern literature as well as the oral tradition of the Southern folk.

But I think it's necessary first to address those associations which have led some to question whether Forrest "deserves the honor" accorded to him—or the opprobrium either. To some, Forrest's reputation has been tainted by his activities before, during, and after the Great Conflict. Before the War, Forrest was, among other things, a slavetrader, a function regarded (even then) with distaste. It is reasonable to assume that Forrest dealt in slaves because it was a fast way to make money in booming Memphis. Forrest was an uneducated self-made man rising rapidly on the Old Frontier; and in this regard, numerous stories have been attested to revealing a man whom slaves sought out and one who was scrupulous in his dealings and one who respected the integrity of slave families. During the War, Forrest was the victim of the Northern propaganda machine that held him responsible for "the massacre of Fort Pillow." In fact, the assault and reduction of Fort Pillow (April 12, 1864) has provoked a dispute that still smolders. A study of the literature suggests to me that there was a massacre, though its extent was originally exaggerated. The record also suggests to me that, on the Northern side, incompetent leadership and a drunken soldiery were substantially to blame for atrocities. In any case, it has never been demonstrated that Forrest was to blame. In fact, he labored to stop the shooting. Charged to investigate the affair by Grant, who had an eye to reprisals, Sherman himself recommended no action.

Another point: after the War, considerable if shadowy evidence

suggests that the first Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan was Nathan Bedford Forrest (the term "Wizard" being derived from his sobriquet, "the Wizard of the Saddle," earned the hard way). Sinister legends and contemporary apprehensions aren't helpful in understanding the context in which the first Klan was formed: disorder, violence, "Union Leagues," Federal occupation. But there is a distinction to be made between the first Klan and the xenophobic Klan of the 1920s and today. Those who associate Forrest with an ahistorical Klan never choose to remember that he, according to his own testimony delivered before a Congressional committee, "suppressed" it—ordered it disbanded, because he had the pure personal power to do so. As he said, the original Klan had begun to attract "scoundrels."

Those eager to associate Forrest with the scoundrels he repudiated are no wiser—or no more honest—than those who seek to identify him completely with slavery. These same neo-Puritans, cleaning up history by effacing it, are sure that the catastrophe of the War clearly showed who was and who wasn't a friend of the black man. But they never feel bound to mention that Forrest freed his slaves during the War, or that some of these former slaves stayed with him after it.

The "fierce" Forrest who delighted in the company of women and children, the "devil" who once backed out of a duel with an apology, is not the horrid bogeyman that so exercises some imaginations. Oh, he was fierce all right, when his dander was up; and he was an all too real bogeyman to the Yankees who fought against him—as well as to any slackers or cowards who fought beside him. But the point about Forrest—what made him a legendary name—was his matchless courage and energy, his tenacity and imagination, his imposing physical prowess, and, above all, his flinty integrity. Forrest's personal achievement during the War is like no other.

I am not aware of anyone who rose so far so fast as Forrest did: from private to lieutenant general in less than four years. Mind you, Forrest had very little booklearning, and no military training whatsoever when he joined the Confederate Army at the age of forty. What Forrest did possess was a native shrewdness honed on rough living; a complete self-confidence; and no illusions whatsoever about violence (for him, a nettle to be grasped firmly) or about war. (Knowing nothing, he had nothing to unlearn.) Forrest was able, at Brice's Crossroads (June 10, 1864) to consummate a military masterpiece entirely worthy of comparison with the hat-tricks turned by Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson at Second Manassas and Chancellorsville. But he had never, like Lee, been Commandant of West

Point, nor had he, like Jackson, paced off the field at Waterloo, or fought in the Mexican War, as both those professionals did. To Forrest there was no mystique attaching to the military. What he attempted, he went straight at, as he had always done—though not without subtlety.

Nor am I aware of any other warrior since the Middle Ages who so often assumed that a leader should do his share of the fighting. When Lee, in an emergency, went forward to rally his men, the fact was remarkable. Forrest was not a Virginia gentleman accustomed to performing his role. His sabre, apparently, spent a lot of time in use, and his pistols even more so. The conservative estimate of the number of horses shot from under Forrest is 29; and the number of adversaries he slew in personal combat is usually put at 30.

One example of the Forrest style is the action at the Fallen Timbers following the battle of Shiloh. Sherman's soldiers were attempting to press the rear guard of the retreating Confederates. That rear guard happened to be commanded by Nathan Bedford Forrest, who observed that the advancing Federals were broken up by their movement over tangled ground. Immediately announcing a charge which he led himself, Forrest not only overran the Yankees but out-ran his own men. Whirling on horseback amid an army of enemies who were shouting "Kill that man!" "Knock him off his horse!" Forrest slashed and hacked on all sides. Finally one soldier pulled the trigger of a rifle pressed against Forrest's hip. The force of the blast lifted Old Bedford out of his saddle, as the Minie ball lodged against his spine. His reaction to being shot in the back at no range was characteristic. He snatched up a dumbfounded Yankee and gave spur to the wounded mount that bore him away, with the Union soldier held behind his back as a living shield against the bullets that flew past. Throwing down his unwilling shield and dismounting his dying animal in the safety of his own lines, Forrest beheld dropped jaws all around.

Two weeks later, Forrest was forced to go under the knife without anesthesia to remove the bullet in his back. He had opened the wound while jumping a horse over a fence. But his idiosyncratic response to violence and pain was a cheerful one. He soon put the following advertisement in the *Memphis Appeal*:

#### 200 Recruits Wanted

I will receive 200 able-bodied men if they will present themselves at my headquarters by the first of June with good horse and gun. I wish none but those who desire to be actively engaged. My headquarters for the present is

at Corinth, Miss. Come on boys if you want a heap of fun and kill some Yankees.

N.B. Forrest  
Col., Commanding Forrest's Regiment

Searching the whole of military history, grasping for superlatives and comparisons, we can hardly find the like of Forrest. His was the bravado of an unselfconscious man who never bragged or blustered and who expressed himself always in action. He was never paralysed by responsibility any more than by wounds, and never inhibited by fear, doubt or confusion.

Three examples of Forrest's presence and clarity of mind stand in sharp contrast to the behavior of the Confederate brass; for it seems that Forrest was always struggling with his superiors when he was not fighting his enemies. In all cases, Forrest's unclouded vision was justified by events. When, for example, the commanding Confederates determined to surrender Fort Donelson and its soldiers in February 1862—a strategic and perhaps irrecoverable loss—Lt. Col. Forrest was having none of it. He got his men and some others out of there, without hindrance or loss of a man, justifying his contention that if the gray backs couldn't or wouldn't fight, they could at least get out of the trap. This knowledge did not increase Forrest's respect for West Pointers. Neither did his experience on the night of April 6-7 at Shiloh. Having personally reconnoitered the enemy positions and observed Buell's reinforcements coming in, Forrest knew what the true situation was: "We'll be whipped like hell." But no one in authority would listen to the man who, unrestrained by precedent or prescription, would believe only what he himself knew to be the case.

Forrest did not, like Polk, D.H. Hill, and Longstreet, merely grouse about Bragg's failure to follow up after Chickamauga. His ability to understand the entire situation after that immense battle of 1863 indicates that he could indeed have succeeded if entire armies had been entrusted to him. His surveillance of the Federals (he commanded only the cavalry of the right wing) was conducted personally. At Sharpsburg, Stonewall Jackson asked Private Hood to shinny up a tree and count flags. But at Chickamauga, Forrest himself climbed a tree and sent a message that showed he was aware of the Gestalt of two great armies: "I think we ought to press forward as rapidly as possible." Bragg dawdled, and Forrest wondered aloud, "What does he fight battles for?" Bragg neglected his immediate duty to the point of frittering away the last great opportunity of the Confederacy; but he didn't neglect an opportunity to harass Forrest by

assigning his troops to Joe Wheeler.

Forrest was at the breaking point, but he knew how to deal with what he considered to be a personal affront. He not only sent Bragg a blistering letter, but sought him out in front of witnesses in order to perfect the most spectacular act of insubordination on record. Shaking his finger under Bragg's nose, Forrest let fly the fury of a frustrated man of action:

I have stood your meanness as long as I intend to. You have played the part of a damned scoundrel, and are a coward, and if you were any part of a man I would slap your jaws and force you to resent it.

You may as well not issue any more orders to me, for I will not obey them. And I will hold you personally responsible for any further indignities you try to inflict on me.

You have threatened to arrest me for not obeying your orders promptly. I dare you to do it, and I say to you that if you ever again try to interfere with me or cross my path, it will be at the peril of your life.

If Bragg had wanted to respond, needless to say Forrest was willing to oblige him. But there was no response. By December, Forrest was assigned to serve under Polk, where he soon raised another command and was promoted to the rank of major general. He was to go on to another promotion and independent command, and to lead his "second West Tennessee raid"; rout more than twice his number at Okolona, Miss.; raid West Tennessee again in March 1864; rout more than twice his number at Brice's Crossroads; and mount his dramatic raid on Memphis. Even so, his war on Sherman's supply lines did not cripple an invasion which subsisted on the country it occupied. His last independent raid was the "Johnsonville campaign" of October-November 1864, during which he not only attacked but captured Federal gunboats, and in effect fought a naval action on the Tennessee River. Thereafter, Forrest and his men served as the rear guard for Hood's wrecked army as it retreated from the disasters of Franklin and Nashville. In April 1865, Forrest was roughly handled by the overwhelming force of Wilson's troopers, as the Confederacy collapsed. At the end, Forrest made the decision to surrender. The last three sentences of his farewell to his troops may imply to some a basis for his subsequent involvement with the first Klan:

...I have never on the field of battle sent you where I felt myself unwilling to go. You have been good soldiers, you can be good citizens. Obey the law, preserve your honor, and the government to which you have surrendered

can afford to be and will be magnanimous.

Bedford Forrest had already achieved (even in defeat) those victories which would attain the stature of legend, because they were on the tongues of the Southern people. He has been celebrated in song and story because his adventures were remarkable in themselves, and because the deeds and character of Nathan Bedford Forrest came to represent a perfected image of Southern humor and language. Recitals of facts about Forrest sound like tall tales about anyone else. Amid the failure of the Confederate leadership in the West, his name denoted success. What might have resulted from a timely recognition of Forrest's powers has been a matter of conjecture ever since.

Jefferson Davis admitted at Forrest's funeral that "the generals commanding in the Southwest never appreciated Forrest until it was too late....I was misled by them." Gen. Joseph E. Johnston supposed that "had he had the advantages of a thorough military education and training, [Forrest] would have been the great central figure of the war." Even Lee tipped his hat in Forrest's direction. He identified the greatest military genius of the war as "Gen. N.B. Forrest, who, with the least means, accomplished more than any other general." But the handsomest compliment Forrest received was from Sherman—of all people. Sherman nominated Forrest as "the most remarkable man our Civil War produced on either side." Sherman appreciated the man who had bedeviled him, knowing that "He had never read a military book in his life, knew nothing about tactics, could not even drill a company, but he had a genius for strategy which was original, and to me incomprehensible. There was no theory or art of war by which I could calculate with any degree of certainty what Forrest was up to. He always seemed to know what I was doing or intended to do...."

By the time Forrest died in 1877, wasted away to a bare one hundred pounds, the man who had been a Homeric paragon of strength had already outlived his own charisma, which took on a second life in the memories and stories that related high spirits, low cunning, and rural idioms. That's why 20,000 people turned out for his funeral. The tales mounted in the telling. The Forrest who explained that he made it a practice to get there first with the most men, was, with embellishment and a wink, made to say he "got there fustest with the mostest," a tag that has unfortunately stuck. Although the expression is memorably amusing, the implication that Forrest ever had the mostest of anything is misleading. What Forrest really meant was that he struck first and hard; and he was only agreeing with

Napoleon and traditional tactics—unknowingly—by identifying the pivotal importance of dominating the point of attack. A famous example: when Jackson attacked at Chancellorsville, though his army was greatly outnumbered, he and Lee had arranged by maneuver to outweigh the enemy at the point of attack. This is the object of maneuver, all the way back to Hannibal and before. Forrest intuitively understood this and demonstrated in his first real fight at Sacramento, Kentucky, that he knew all about “double envelopment,” though he had never heard of that jargon (he called it “hittin’ ‘em on the end”). Yet stuck with the phrase “fustest with the mostest,” Forrest—who was many things but not a “funny” or ironical man—comes off sounding more like George Stevens, the Kingfish, than he does like the naturally lordly, brass-lunged, ambidextrous and prodigious master-warrior he really was.

What is “funny” about Forrest, though, is his extensive record of fooling and foxing the enemy—and his spelling. Apparently Forrest went at orthography the same way he did everything else. The results were striking but effective. He seemed not to know much of convention, but rendered sounds as he heard them. The well-known note he left for Emma Sansom, who showed him a river ford he could use to continue his epic pursuit of Streight’s raiders, is a good example, one which offsets the “romance” attending the image of the man on horseback who rides off with a girl mounted behind him.

Making Emma Sansom famous by accepting her aid, Forrest went on to complete “The Running of Streight,” as Donald Davidson called it later when he wrote his poem of that title. Out-thought and out-fought, Streight did not find it so amusing when he had been run clear across north Alabama and captured by a force less than half the size of his own. In his final conference with Forrest, Streight was casually led to see an illusive number of soldiers and guns that convinced him to surrender. When he discovered too late that he had been hoodwinked, he was told by Forrest, “Ah, Colonel, all is fair in love and war, you know.” This was the Forrest who was remembered as a masculine model, a Southern hero, and a mysterious force in history and fiction, as well as in outrageous and factual oral narratives.

Nathan Bedford Forrest’s exploits were chronicled during his lifetime, and with his approval, in *The Campaigns of Lieutenant General N.B. Forrest and of Forrest’s Cavalry*, by Brigadier General Thomas Jordan and J.P. Pryor (New Orleans and New York, 1868). Later, Dr. John Allan Wyeth (once president of the American Medical Association) was to compile his *Life of General N.B. Forrest* (New

York, 1899). Captain J. Harvey Mathes wrote for the "Great Commanders" series a *Bedford Forrest* (New York, 1902). John W. Morton's *The Artillery of Nathan Bedford Forrest's Cavalry* (Nashville, 1909) was an authoritative statement made by one of Forrest's right-hand men, his own chief of artillery. Still later, Andrew Nelson Lytle was to write a vigorous and idiomatic account of Forrest's life in the context of the Old Frontier, seeing him as a symbol of Southern Feudalism and connecting him with the point of view that sustained the Agrarians: *Bedford Forrest and His Critter Company* (New York, 1931). And Lytle would write of Forrest again in his *A Wake for the Living: A Family Chronicle* (1975).

Captain Eric William Sheppard's *Bedford Forrest, the Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman* (London and New York, 1930) was of no consequence, though it did show something of the respect for Forrest on the other side of the Atlantic. (Lytle's *Forrest* was published in London in 1938.) The most scholarly, inclusive, and clear life of Forrest is that by Robert Selph Henry, *"First With the Most" Forrest* (New York and Indianapolis, 1944). Henry also edited *As They Saw Forrest: Some Recollections and Comments of Contemporaries* (Jackson, Tennessee, 1956), a collection valuable for its gathering of obscure testimonies by comrades, enemies, civilians, and Forrest himself. And Jack Weller's "Nathan Bedford Forrest: An Analysis of Untutored Military Genius" (*Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 18, 1959), William D. McCain's "Nathan Bedford Forrest: An Evaluation" (*Journal of Mississippi History*, Vol. 24, Oct. 1962), and Glenn Tucker's "Untutored Genius of the War" (*Civil War Times*, June 1964) are all strong studies of Forrest. Needless to say, "the Wizard of the Saddle" is a presence in such standard references as *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* and is firmly in context in such a worthy history as Shelby Foote's *The Civil War: A Narrative*.

So Forrest made his mark in historical literature. He also became a subject and a reference in fiction—like other great soldiers. Jesse Hill Ford's *The Raider* (Boston, 1975) contains a paraphrase of Forrest's tangle at the Fallen Timbers, attributed to the fictional Elias McCutcheon, frontiersman and planter. "The devil McCutcheon" is a pastiche of the man Sherman called "that devil Forrest." Neither in historical imagination nor in use of language can Ford's novel compare with Perry Lentz's harrowing vision, *The Falling Hills* (New York, 1967), a powerful work that is not for the squeamish. Lentz's fictional representation of the context and reality of "the Fort Pillow massacre" is the best comment on that episode I know. His Forrest is a fearsome presence, unsympathetic but not responsible for the

excesses which are portrayed as the result of tragic circumstances, false assumptions and human nature.

Old Bedford charged his way into the Republic of Letters by storming minds that produced "the Southern Renaissance." He figures prominently in Shelby Foote's novel *Shiloh* (New York, 1952) as well as in *The Southern Mandarins: Letters of Caroline Gordon to Sally Wood, 1924-1937* (Baton Rouge and London, 1984). Sally Wood gives a glimpse of Andrew Lytle composing his biography of Forrest at Benfolly ("One met him pacing about the house with blank eyes, giving military orders. 'Then General Forrest said, "...'" "Only occasionally did he become himself. Most of the time he actually *was* General Forrest."). Allen Tate writes to Wood recommending Lytle's "very fine" *Bedford Forrest*. Caroline Gordon quotes Wyeth's *Life of Forrest* as she researches the novel Forrest would dominate, and studies the battles he fought. Gordon's *None Shall Look Back* (1937) is a distinguished historical novel that she thought did not come off. However that may be, it is a compendium of Forrest lore, rendered dramatically. And we cannot omit from the recital William Faulkner's story "My Grandmother Millard and General Bedford Forrest and the Battle of Harrykin Creek" (1943), a charming romance. (Professor Evans Harrington wrote the book and lyrics of a musical comedy derived from Faulkner, *My Grandmother Millard*, which I have not seen. Should I imagine Forrest as a baritone?) As Elmo Howell has pointed out (in his "William Faulkner's General Forrest and the Uses of History," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 29, Fall 1970), Faulkner represents his patriarchal John Sartoris as a lieutenant of Forrest; and what is fictionally set in April 1862, was derived from an engagement at Hurricane Creek in August 1864. Faulkner's ancestor, Col. Falkner, however, did not soldier with Forrest, though he did operate in Forrest's stamping grounds. It seems that the adventures of W. C. Falkner of Mississippi have been associated with those of W. W. Faulkner of Kentucky, who did indeed "ride with Forrest." (See Andrew Brown's study "The First Mississippi Partisan Rangers, C.S.A." in *Civil War History*, Vol. I, No. 4, Dec. 1955.). Even so, the name "Forrest" resonates throughout Faulkner's work, denoting not only determination and derring-do but also the spirit of the community that Forrest sprang from and Faulkner described: North Mississippi and West Tennessee around Memphis. So we find Forrest's name in a story like "Shall Not Perish" as well as in *Sartoris, The Unvanquished, Go Down, Moses, Requiem for a Nun, The Mansion* and *The Reivers*. Cleanth Brooks has pointed out Faulkner's debt to Irvin S. Cobb's "Judge Priest" stories, in which the Con-

federate veterans are ones who served with Forrest, "the special hero of north Mississippi." Long before Cobb and Faulkner invoked his name, Forrest had already been connected with the literary world: Lafcadio Hearn was in Memphis when Forrest was buried, and transcribed stories he heard there and then. And it just so happened that the young man who wrote the letters of manumission freeing Forrest's slaves was one who would later make a name for himself in the world of letters: George W. Cable.

Considering then the nature of a fame that so extends itself in history and literature and culture—even to the point of registering in various Hollywood westerns—we may question the presumption of those who find Forrest a "problem." There was a time when great deeds were exalted in the glory of epic celebration: the wrath of Achilles, the craft of Ulysses, the fidelity of Hector and the devotion of Aeneas, the strength of Beowulf and of Siegfried, the honor of Roland. But we live now in an anti-heroic, as well as an unheroic, age. There was also a time when identity with the hero did not depend altogether on a people's identity with their own community, their blood and place. But now it seems we must question the values and the identity of the hero, while refusing to examine the assumptions that determine a contemporary—and very temporary—celebrity.

If Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, C.S.A., is today "a forgotten man," as I have heard asserted, what then of Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, U.S.A.? Born in Memphis in 1905, the great-grandson of the cavalryman was graduated from West Point and became chief of staff of the Second Air Force before being shot down leading the bombing raid on Kiel, Germany, June 13, 1943. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross before dying on June 4, 1944, "the last of his line." Modern consciousness would perhaps decree that the latter-day Forrest shot out of the sky in a Flying Fortress was defending an unjust social system and was even an officer in a segregated army. Such a man is not remembered, let alone venerated, today.

Even so, in Gadsden, Alabama, there still stands (unless someone has dynamited it) a marble monument bearing Emma Sansom's effigy, erected in 1907 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The statue's right hand points the way, as the living one did, so the hero could persevere. And the hero, who asked for a lock of the girl's hair, left her a note that she would treasure more for the meaning of its words than for the literacy of their formulation:

Hed Quaters in Sadle  
May 2, 1863

highest regardes to Miss Ema Sanson for hir gallant conduct while my forse  
was skirmishing with the Federals across Black Creek near Gadisden Allaba-  
ma

N.B. Forrest,  
Brig. Genl. Comding N. Ala.

"General Forrest and his men endeared themselves to us forever," she wrote later; and we can understand why. But there was another Forrest who has endeared himself permanently to those who appreciate the iron will and implacable demands represented by his endorsement of a soldier's thrice-repeated request for furlough: "I have tolle you twict goddamit No!" A failure to remember such a man or an action aimed at obliterating any honor accorded to him is more of a disgrace to factitious iconoclasts who can't recognize greatness when they see it, than it is a dishonor to a man who was personally and ineradicably honored.

Caroline Gordon dramatizes the story in *None Shall Look Back*; Andrew Lytle renders it as follows in his splendid book, *Bedford Forrest and His Critter Company*:

It is told in Murfreesboro that...while Forrest was waiting impatiently to withdraw with his booty and his prisoners, a stately, gentle-featured lady stepped out of her residence on the square and walked towards the town's deliverer. As she swept her skirt along the red brick walk, she held in one of her thin white hands a small lace handkerchief and, in the other, a silver spoon.

"General Forrest," she asked, "will you back your horse for me?"

Bedford lifted his hat, and, with his heavy black hair falling down his shoulders, bowed; then pulled on the reins.

Leaning over, she scooped up a spoon of dust from the ground where the horse had been pawing and poured it carefully into the folds of the handkerchief. Without any more words she bowed very low and turned back towards her house, bearing away with her the silver spoon and the little piece of bulging lace. ☆

**The Truth About Jefferson Davis**  
*by Robert McHugh***1983**

Rosemont Plantation, the childhood home of Jefferson Davis, is nestled in the gently rolling hills of southwest Mississippi. Carefully restored, the Davis family home is shaded by moss-hung oaks and catalpa trees, surrounded by lush vegetation and warmed by newly-greened memories of the past. It is the last place on earth one would expect to collide with one of those anti-Davis myths, born of Yankee fury and hatred, still restlessly and unaccountably alive.

In the company of two friends, I visited Rosemont on a May afternoon so adorned by a fresh breeze and an obliging blue sky that it could have been gift-wrapped.

We were welcomed at the door of the two-story wooden home into the early 19th century by a Rosemont guide, a cheerful woman in period costume. Well-trained for her role, she showed us through the house, distinguishing with nice attention to historical detail between those items of furniture that were Davis-owned and those that were period pieces of another origin.

She knew the house and everything in it intimately, answered questions steeped in obscurity and gave a flawless performance as a guide.

However, a casual comment about an antebellum shawl, draped over a chair, led to a digression about the capture by Union soldiers of Jefferson Davis near Irwingsville, Georgia. Our guide, leaving the safe harbor of memorization for the rougher sea of improvisation, told us that Davis had been captured wearing a "lady's garment."

Asked if she meant a shawl, she said firmly that the President of the Confederacy was clothed "in a dress" as a disguise to aid in his escape. "This," she said, "is what we have learned."

This was not at all what they had learned, as a later discreet conversation with a Rosemont office employee disclosed. The employee, stunned by what the guide had said, promised that corrective action would be taken at once.

The late scholar Hudson Strode has put the capture story together with such detailed research and convincing accuracy that one would think that the "lady's dress" myth would be forever buried, North and South, and particularly at a Davis shrine. But, alas!

I do not mean by this vignette to condemn the work at Rosemont. Curator Ernesto Caldeira and lawyer Percival Beacraft, who bought the place in 1971, have done a superb job of making Rosemont a

valuable and historic shrine. I mention the matter only to underscore the magnitude of misunderstanding that clouds Jefferson Davis' place in American history.

Considered even casually, the "dress" myth had about as much credibility as the one that had Davis masterminding the assassination of President Lincoln, and yet that story gained wide acceptance. President Andrew Johnson, in an official proclamation, accused Davis of complicity in Lincoln's murder.

One of Varina's dresses might have fit the Union midget general, Ulysses S. Grant (five feet, one when he entered West Point) but never could have covered the more heroic Davis proportions. He was more than six feet tall. Nor would a man of Davis' dignity have, under any circumstances, dressed in drag, not even to escape a shameful and certain death.

Strode's careful reconstruction of the capture has Davis awakened by gunfire and rising "fully dressed in the gray suit in which he had slept. . . ." Strode continues: "In the semi-darkness, he grabbed a waterproof sleeveless raglan which was similiar to his, though it happened to be his wife's. As he strode off, Varina impulsively took off her dark shawl and threw it about him." When an armed trooper ordered him to halt and surrender, Davis dropped the shawl and waterproof and advanced on the man, with escape in mind. Varina interfered, and it was all over. Of such stuff, fatuous myths are made.

Other misconceptions about Jefferson Davis abound. The argument that a better man could have led the Confederacy to victory is specious in the extreme. The North had many times the manpower of the overmatched South and vastly more resources.

Grant, a failure as a merchant, a railroad executive, a farmer and as President of the United States, at least knew what any schoolboy knows: if you have more men and materiel, you are likely to win in the slaughterhouse that is warfare.

Other misjudgments branded Davis as austere, inflexible and impatient. Historian Bruce Catton has answered such charges: "It may well be that at Richmond he made enemies out of men who would have been his supporters if he had been more flexible; yet his very inflexibility, in the impossible job that was given him, was one of his strengths." He might have added that in a time of crisis and conflict, flexibility can dissolve into weakness and sap the strength that is needed for victory.

Jefferson Davis' role as President of the Confederacy is so familiar to so many that it would be repetitious to go into it in extensive detail in this brief appreciation. What does need some explication is his

earlier career as an American patriot.

Certainly it was as a patriot that in 1853 he accepted from President Franklin Pierce a position in his cabinet as secretary of war. Ever reluctant to leave the peace and quiet of his Brierfield plantation, Davis resisted the appointment to the last. The Nichols biography of Franklin Pierce said that it required "all of Pierce's persuasive powers to prevail upon him (Davis) to enter the cabinet."

During his four years as head of the War Department, Davis instituted additional courses in the humanities at West Point to establish an officer class of genuinely educated men.

As a military man, he was spectacularly innovative. He introduced an improved system of infantry tactics that may have helped Union soldiers a few years later: he substituted iron for wood in gun carriages, secured rifled muskets and real rifles and introduced the famed Minie ball. He beefed up coastal defenses, formed a medical service and took charge of surveys and routes for a military railway across the continent.

Pierce admired Davis more than any other member of the cabinet. When Davis left the executive branch of government in 1857 to serve once again as United States Senator from Mississippi, Pierce wrote to him as follows: "I can scarcely bear the parting from you. You have been strength and solace to me for four anxious years and never failed me."

Davis was equally effective as a United States Senator. In fact, the impact of his influence in the Congress of his time was felt in Biloxi, Mississippi, more than a century after he left that body.

In August of 1969, Hurricane Camille devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast, causing considerable damage at Beauvoir, Davis' last home, maintained to this day as a shrine and tourist attraction.

Many valuable documents suffered water damage. Specialists from the Smithsonian Institution appeared on the scene as volunteers to help restore those documents. A Mississippian, assisting in the Beauvoir clean-up, asked one of the Smithsonian men what brought them to the disaster scene.

The expert in document restoration said he was there to repay an old debt. Had it not been for Jefferson Davis, he said, the Smithsonian might not be in existence today.

It is certainly true that as a young congressman Davis worked diligently for establishing the Smithsonian Institution in line with the bequest from the British scientist, James Smithson. His interest in it never flagged.

Varina wrote proudly to her mother in 1854: "Jefferson Davis

was one of the most active of the fourteen regents of the recently established Smithsonian Institution and always enjoyed entertaining the distinguished American and foreign scientists who met in annual convocation."

As a Senator, he did not subscribe to the theory that the spoils belong to the political victor. He worked to put in place federal regulations that later became the formal Civil Service system that we know today.

This young Kentucky-born, Mississippi-reared Senator created interest in Panama by urging the purchase of what is now the Canal Zone to build a railway that would foster commerce and make U.S. coastal defenses more secure.

The nationalism that he embraced in his earliest days in the Senate began to wane, however, when developments led him to direct his energies to the defense of slavery. He argued that the states alone could exclude slavery from the territories and that the Missouri Compromise line should be extended to the Pacific.

As the catastrophe-to-come became ever more apparent, Jefferson Davis became ever more the champion of state sovereignty, the defender of the South.

After Mississippi seceded in January of 1861, Davis made his farewell address to the Senate. He apparently believed that many Northerners were in sympathy with the Southern cause, as indeed many were. Carl Sandburg wrote in *A Lincoln Preface* as follows: "In all essential propositions the Confederacy had the moral support of powerful, respectable elements throughout the North." Sandburg estimated that in a Northern electorate of four million, "probably more than a million voters believed in the justice of the cause of the South as compared with the North."

To his colleagues in the Senate, Davis said:

I am sure I feel no hostility toward you, Senators from the North. I am sure there is not one of you, whatever sharp discussion there may have been between us, to whom I cannot now say, in the presence of my God, I wish you well; and such, I am sure, is the feeling of the people I represent. I, therefore, feel that I but express their desire when I say I hope and they hope for peaceable relations with you, though we must part. They may be mutually beneficial to us in the future, as they have been in the past, if you so will it. The reverse may bring disaster on every portion of the country, and if you will have it thus, we will invoke the God of our fathers. We will vindicate the right as best we may.

When he finished, there was a stillness on the Senate floor. Davis lingered in Washington for a week to recover from a bout with neuralgia and may have even hoped that he and other Southern senators would be arrested as "traitors." Rumors to that effect were current. Davis wrote that such arrests and trials "might not be an undesirable mode of testing the question of the right of a state to withdraw from the union." The Supreme Court was generally favorable to the doctrine of States' Rights. So the possibility of such a trial makes for interesting speculation.

But speculation is no substitute for reality. War came, Americans faced one another in some of the most viciously fought battles in history, and the land was spattered with blood.

With the war raging around him, Jefferson Davis took the reins of a loose confederation of states and with great administrative genius created a postal system, a currency, a foreign policy, an army, a navy and a constitution. His hastily formed nation was sadly lacking in powder mills and rolling mills and had little industry of any kind. Its harbors were mostly blocked by federally-controlled forts, and it faced a young and vigorously growing nation with ten times the resources for waging war.

It stands as one of history's most remarkable achievements that Davis fashioned a government and a fighting unit which held the North at bay for four long years during which time victory was in sight on more than one occasion.

From the single standpoint of trying to mobilize against vastly superior forces, Davis' position in 1861 was similar to Winston Churchill's in the early days of World War II. Neither had much to work with. Both stretched what resources they had to their absolute limits.

Davis and Churchill were unlike in most respects except that each was, as Clement Attlee so aptly said of Churchill, "a layer cake." Davis' layers included the educated man of the 18th century, steeped in the classics; the contemporary man of the 19th; and that "curious layer" Attlee spoke of that placed him, through foresight, a century ahead of his time. Jefferson Davis' public utterances and papers are liberally sprinkled with examples of a sure ability to penetrate contemporary problems and propose for them solutions that were many years ahead of his time.

Davis saw the American hemisphere as a unit and foresaw the time when a good neighbor policy with Latin American nations would be in the best interests of the United States. He also saw advantages in trade with China. Few others did until Richard Nixon acted in the seventies. Trade with China has grown since then from

\$300 million in 1977 to \$5.5 billion.

With remarkable foresight Davis envisioned a time when labor and management would be at each other's throats in America and had a plan to prevent it. Of this, he wrote:

The old war between capital and labor has called forth the best intellects of Europe. It has disturbed commerce, overthrown governments, produced anarchy and crept from the wreck without solving the problem. With us, the contest is in its incipient state, and happily it may be that something can be done to check its growth. Decisions should be based on something like a cooperative principle of industrial partnership, in which the wages of the employees should be measured by the profits of the corporation. If in this manner, a community interest could be established, the welfare and contentment of both would seem to be a possible result.

It was an accurate assessment. Corporations of today with profit sharing plans are rarely, if ever, shattered by serious labor strife.

In 1887, a movement was getting off the ground in Texas toward national prohibition, or as H.L. Mencken has described it, "Our 13 years of horror." Jefferson Davis foresaw its dangers to state sovereignty. He understood the impossibility of legislating good sense and morality. Writing that year to former Texas Gov. F.R. Lubbock, Davis said:

Reared in the creed of democracy, my faith in its tenets has grown and I adhere to the maxim that the world is governed too much. To destroy individual liberty and moral responsibility would be to eradicate one evil by the substitution of another. The abuse, and not the use, of stimulants, it must be confessed, is the evil to be remedied. If it has proved the wooden horse in which many a disguised enemy of state sovereignty as the guardian of individual liberty was introduced, then let it be a warning that the progressive march would probably be from village to state and from state to the United States.

The "noble experiment" he warned against came as he predicted and brought with it a wave of crime and alcohol abuse the likes of which the nation had never experienced.

Jefferson Davis also had a vision of what America should be. Although his own ambition, as he said, "lies buried in the grave of the Confederacy," he knew that the urgent need of the post-war days was a reunited country. He shared that vision with a group of young men at Mississippi City, just a few miles from Beauvoir, in March of 1888.

He said in part:

Before you lies the future—a future full of golden promise; a future of expanding national glory, before which all the world will stand amazed. Let me beseech you to lay aside all rancor, all bitter sectional feeling, and to take your places in the ranks of those who will bring about a consummation devoutly to be wished—a reunited country.

It was his last public address. He must have given sober thought to those utterances, and he must have felt deeply that the wounds suffered by the country he loved so much and served so well must be healed.

The lives of all public figures in America are carefully studied. Few escape that microscopic inspection without damage. Richard Nixon's paranoia and disregard of the law have been well-publicized; John F. Kennedy's revealed promiscuity was of such magnitude that R. Emmett Tyrrell was moved to write that it "places a new dimension on the naming of that vast cultural palace in Washington, D.C., the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts;" Agnew's kickback operations in Baltimore and Grant's Indian trade scandals were black marks on their careers, and in recent years we have seen more than one congressman drunk in public places and others arrested for making homosexual advances. No one came under more scrutiny than Jefferson Davis. Yet his life was lived without a tinge of scandal, although he had many enemies who willed it otherwise.

Those enemies had their finest chance to discredit him during his period of imprisonment at Fort Monroe. Secretary of War Stanton knew that Davis would be popular with West Pointers so he cast around for a jailer, suitably tough and without links to the military academy.

He found the right man for the job—Nelson A. Miles, a former clerk in a Massachusetts crockery shop whose ambition and singleness of purpose helped him climb over others to the rank of Brevet Major General.

From the security measures Miles took to ensure that Davis would not escape, one would have thought that the Army had on its hands a kind of Hercules, capable of shaking the pillars of the huge old fort, known for its impregnable construction as "The Gibraltar of the Chesapeake."

Davis was guarded by 70 soldiers, two of whom paced incessantly within the cell that housed him. Every two hours, there was a noisy changing of the guard. Every 15 minutes, the officer of the day was required to check the cell.

But that wasn't enough. Incredibly, Miles ordered leg irons for his

famous prisoner. To Davis' credit, he physically resisted the degradation. Strode tells us that it required four soldiers to hold Davis while the shackles were put in place by a blacksmith. In a written report, the captain in charge of the procedure told General Miles that Davis "showed unnatural strength" in the attempt to fight off his captors.

Davis later wrote that he regretted the resistance, explaining that it resulted from what he construed at the time as "a right and duty." Few of us today would share those regrets.

In Davis' earliest days of agony at Fort Monroe, he was deprived of essential medical care, given poor rations to be consumed without knife or fork, and made to suffer sleepless nights under the constantly shining light.

The *New York Herald* crowed editorially, "No more will Jeff'n Davis be known among the masses of men. He is buried alive."

And so he was for two years until sanity returned to Washington, and he was set free. The doctors who treated him and a number of his captors are on record praising the courage, integrity and sense of honor he showed during his confinement.

The character and moral fiber of a people can be injured when there is a lack of integrity, honor and courage among their leaders. As President of the Confederacy, Davis gave Southerners a legacy of integrity by discharging his duties with the same dedication and sense of personal honor that he brought to his duties as a member of the United States Senate, as a military officer and as secretary of war.

His entire life was one of service to his country and to the Confederate cause in which he believed so deeply. If the rewards for that service were the defeat of the South, his arrest, imprisonment and the obliteration of the cause he championed, out of the rubble of those tragedies his achievements have erected an enduring monument on a secure foundation. Jefferson Davis was one of the most remarkable men in the annals of American history. ☆

# **PART FOUR**

# **THE BATTLE CONTINUES**

## PBS's "The Civil War": The Mythmanagement of History 1990 Ludwell Johnson

In the September issue of the American Historical Association's newsletter, a rave review predicted that the PBS production "The Civil War" might become "the *Gone With the Wind* of documentaries." After watching almost all of it, I would suggest *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as its fictional alter ego. But let us not (like "The Civil War") be unfair. It is probably the best of the various kinds of "Civil War" television extravaganzas to appear so far. As anyone who watched the others will know, this is faint praise. When Boswell asked that arch-conservative Dr. Samuel Johnson who was worse, Rousseau or Voltaire, Johnson replied, "Sir, it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them."

On the plus side, the pictures in Ken Burns' documentary were excellent, as they have always been, whether seen on television or in the old *Miller Photographic History* or in the more recent *Image of War* by William C. Davis. The letters from and to soldiers were interesting and frequently moving. Shelby Foote's comments often struck a note of sane moderation. The background music was well-done if repetitious. There were occasional though ineffectual attempts at impartiality in the narration.

Now for the minus side. In the first place, a program like this is inherently incapable of explaining complex historical events. It can only illustrate the cruelty and suffering of war, the romantic naiveté, the poignancy, pathos, courage, cowardice. But even with the best of intentions untrammeled by prejudice or ideological imperatives, to attempt to explain so much by such means is inevitably to distort. When bias, ideology, and sheer ignorance are loaded onto the inherent limitations, then we have something like "The Civil War", a caricature often reminiscent of Republican postwar "Bloody Shirt" political propaganda.

To turn to some of the larger deformities, take slavery, both as the cause of the war and as an institution. The monocausation theory—slavery as the cause—was put forward many years ago by James Ford Rhodes. That view was the received wisdom among the post-war generation, but was powerfully challenged by scholars between the two World Wars.

In the era of the civil rights movement, the importance of slavery was again strongly emphasized by what some have called the neo-abolitionist historians. But even they never completely turned the clock back to Rhodes, as Mr. Ken Burns has tried to with his popular

documentary. To pluck one factor out of a complex historical matrix and offer it, clearly but tacitly, as the cause of war is the result, one can charitably assume, of sheer ignorance.

As for slavery itself, it is likewise torn from context and held up as a uniquely Southern sin. No mention of those Africans in Africa who for generations sold their brothers into slavery; or of the New Englanders who profited for so many years by buying them in Africa and selling them in America; or of the pervasive anti-black prejudice in the Northern states so ably documented thirty years ago by Leon Litwack.

Purported mortality statistics for slaves are presented without comparison to mortality rates among free blacks or whites. There is no hint of the fact that the growth rate of the country's black population was less for seventy years after emancipation than it was before, no awareness of the latest revisionist studies (by Northern scholars) that contradict the raw-head-and-bloody-bones vision presented by producer Ken Burns and his coadjutors.

The handling of Lincoln and the questions of race and slavery are equally unbalanced. The level of discourse here was suggested by Shelby Foote's interviewer, who persisted in believing that Lincoln was an old-line abolitionist. Foote, who one hopes was embarrassed by a good deal of what went on during the eleven hours of the program, gently demurred, but his questioner bulled ahead anyway. In one of those rare and aberrant bows to ostensible impartiality, it is pointed out that Lincoln initially opposed only the extension of slavery, and that he said in his first inaugural he had no intention of interfering with slavery where it existed (the adjoining clause in which the Great Emancipator says that neither does he have any *inclination* to interfere with it is delicately omitted) and that he issued orders for the return of runaway slaves. (Incidentally, Lincoln flatly refused to issue such an order.)

Then after the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation we are treated to an out-of-context quotation from Lincoln's December 1, 1862, message to Congress, including the famous sentence, "we shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth." That comment was made at the end of the second half of his message, which is a plea by Lincoln for congressional approval of a constitutional amendment that would postpone emancipation until the year 1900, compensate slaveowners and provide funds to colonize the ex-slaves somewhere outside the United States.

"I cannot make it better known that I strongly favor colonization." And to those Northerners who feared the freed black would "swarm

forth and cover the land," he said they wouldn't, and if they tried, "cannot the north decide for itself whether to receive them?" Viewers of "The Civil War" documentary were never told that this is the context of "nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of earth." It is an excellent example of the editorial policy of the series.

Nor is the audience told that, at the Hampton Roads Conference in February 1865, when the Confederacy was collapsing, Lincoln sat silently by while his Secretary of State invited the Southern negotiators to bring their states back into the Union and vote down the pending Thirteenth Amendment; or that Lincoln, when visiting fallen Richmond, himself made the same offer to Calhoun's old lieutenant, Duff Green.

As for Lincoln and race, the authors of the program are evidently wholly ignorant of the categorical white-supremacist statements Lincoln made repeatedly and publicly during the 1850s, and do not know that in the late summer of 1862 he told a black delegation that but for the presence of their race, white men would not be killing each other, and it would be best for both blacks and whites if blacks left the country.

As another example of distortion by omission, take the attack on Fort Sumter. In the program, the Confederates suddenly fire on the Union fort, no reason being given. Nothing is said about the repeated assurances given Confederate officials by Lincoln's Secretary of State that the fort would soon be evacuated, assurances offered even while plans to hold the fort were being devised. There is no mention of the warnings the Confederate government began to receive about an expedition being secretly prepared, or of the fact that when the order to capture the fort was issued by the Davis administration, they knew that a flotilla of undetermined strength was coming down the coast, perhaps (as some informants had warned) to capture Charleston. No, nothing of that—the rebels just attacked, it is implied, without cause or provocation.

Other subjects are treated with a degree of unfairness that is bound to raise suspicions as to intent. Space does not permit more than a sampling. Take Fort Pillow. All we come away with is the assertion that the Confederates killed black soldiers after they surrendered. Doubtless some were killed, just as black soldiers sometimes killed Confederates after they had surrendered. What is not told is that, according to the laws of war, if a fortified place refused to surrender after being warned that otherwise an assault would take place, the attackers were entitled to kill all the defenders. Bedford Forrest's men did not do this, even though there was never any for-

mal surrender of the Fort and in spite of the fact that some black soldiers surrendered and then picked up weapons and shot their captors. Of the 557 men in the garrison (295 white, 262 black) 336 survived. Forrest took 226 prisoners, 168 whites and 58 blacks. That was the "massacre."

As for the Battle of the Crater, we are told that Confederates again shot black soldiers as they attempted to surrender. Doubtless some did. But we are not told that when the black troops were sent into the battle they were also shot by Union white soldiers, even as happened in the Battle of the Bulge in the Second World War. And poor old Burnside was entirely responsible for the disaster at the Crater. Did no one tell the script writers that a black division had carefully drilled to lead the assault but was withheld by Grant and Meade at the last moment, and that this was the probable cause of the failure?

As bad as these examples are, nothing except perhaps the treatment of slavery approaches the handling of the subject of prisoners of war. We are transported back to the days of the "Bloody Shirt." The horrors of Andersonville are depicted, and horrors there were, and the living skeletons (emaciated by dysentery, which killed more men than bullets) that were a staple item in Republican atrocity propaganda are again put on display. The viewers are not informed of conditions in Northern camps, where a deliberate policy of deprivation was instituted or of the mortality rate in those camps, which, despite the vastly superior resources available to the Lincoln administration, was nearly as high as in the Confederacy. After all, what more can one expect of a producer (Ken Burns) who characterizes Lee as a "traitor"?

A similar onesidedness can be found in the presentation of Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas. Destruction of property and robbery, including robbery of the slaves, are conceded: how could they not be? But there is nothing about the disgusting desecration of churches, digging up the dead to rob the bodies, nothing of the murder and torture of civilians, of gang rapes, or of the mass rape of black women. No, mainly just the destruction of property to show the Southerners the war was lost and thus save lives — that's all "Old Cump" and his boys were up to.

As for poor George B. McClellan, who certainly had his faults, he is made to look bad so that Lincoln can be made to look good. Just think what that poor man had to put up with! The savaging of McClellan has been *de rigueur* among the faithful, especially since Nicolay and Hay deliberately set out to destroy McClellan's reputation in

their massive biography of Lincoln. One point will have to suffice: in the winter of 1861-1862, McClellan (I think this is nearly a direct quotation from the documentary) "took to his tent with a fever rather than move his army." It was a fever, all right, typhoid fever, said his doctors, and he was in his bed for three weeks.

When all the teachers who have been burning up their VCRs taping "The Civil War" show it to their classes, one can only hope that they will linger over a vignette toward the end, one of the Gettysburg reunion of 1913. It showed those old Confederates retracing their steps up the slopes of Cemetery Ridge, held again by a handful of their old adversaries. But before the old Rebs could totter to the crest, they were met by the old Yanks who rushed down to embrace them. No doubt, to the makers of the film this was just a pleasing touch of sentimentality; but to those who know something of the war, it has far more significance.

During the conflict, soldiers from generals to privates blamed the war on the politicians, and many was the time when Rebs and Yanks, meeting along the picket line, would say: "if they would just leave it to us, we could settle it all quickly and peaceably." Then as now the common soldiers were sent by others to suffer and to die, and the survivors soon began to wonder how the quarrel got started and whether it could possibly be worth the agony they saw all around them. But by that time it was too late to stop. The result is tragedy. And the tragedy is compounded by people like Ken Burns and his collaborators. Too bad they could not have been as just to the Confederate soldiers and their Cause as the old Union veterans at Gettysburg in 1913. ☆

**Who Owns America? After 50 Years**  
**Edward Shapiro**

1986

*I'll Take My Stand* appeared in 1930. Soon after, several of the contributors had second thoughts about the volume's regional emphasis. Perhaps they should have addressed a wider audience in behalf of broader issues, calling their work "Tracts Against Communism" or "A Defense of Christianity." It was in this spirit that Herbert Agar and Allen Tate proposed a sequel called *Who Owns America?*

The Agrarians were persuaded to join Agar and a group of non-Southerners to stake out common ground in what was subtitled "A New Declaration of Independence." With twenty-one essays edited by Agar and Tate, *Who Owns America?* was finally published in 1936.

Now, fifty years after the appearance of *Who Owns America?* the publisher of the Southern Partisan has invited three of the surviving contributors to speak of the book's origins. Their reflections follow this assessment by Edward Shapiro of *Who Owns America?... fifty years after.*

Every student of American culture and literature is familiar with the 1930 volume *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*. Few, however, know of its 1936 sequel, *Who Owns America?: A New Declaration of Independence*, even though it is an important book-length defense of Agrarianism as a viable political and economic option. *I'll Take My Stand* was written before the significance of the 1929 crash had become evident and at a time when the Southern Agrarians were concerned largely with the impact on Southern culture of modern industrialism, religious modernism, and liberalism.

The introduction to *I'll Take My Stand* noted that among the "evils" of modern industrialism were "overproduction, unemployment, and a growing inequality in the distribution of wealth." It anticipated that attempts to deal with such problems would lead to efforts by "super-engineers" and "socialists" to "adapt production to consumption and regulate prices and guarantee business against fluctuations." Ironically, the Agrarians, who had predicted both the Great Depression and New Deal efforts to restore prosperity, were described as visionaries and romantics by their critics.

Edited by the Agrarian Allen Tate and Herbert Agar, a member of the editorial staff of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, *Who Owns Amer-*

ica? contains twenty-one essays, including eight by the Agrarians and six others by Southern supporters of Agrarianism. Agar, the force behind the book's publication, believed the country was politically ripe for a new manifesto espousing political and economic decentralization, the widespread distribution of property, and opposition to economic plutocracy and political collectivism. Because of the Depression, he thought that such a volume would be more programmatic and have a greater national appeal than *I'll Take My Stand*. Such a book, Agar predicted, would be particularly popular in the Midwest. Its authors could become the philosophers of an important anti-plutocratic political movement centered in the South and the Mississippi Valley which would support the interests of small industrialists, petty merchants, and family farmers, defend the ownership of property, and oppose the economic and political collectivism of big business and the American Left.

Agar had first come to the attention of the Agrarians in 1933 with the appearance of his book *The People's Choice*, which won the Pulitzer Prize against stiff competition. In that work, Agar traced the decline of the American presidency since Appomattox. He wrote that the South's defeat had left the way open to domination by northern financial-industrial plutocracy and a "democracy of massed city populations, ignorant foreign labour, graft, and 'machine politics'—the democracy, in other words, that was really plutocracy." Contrasting the "bourgeois ideals and the tyrannous democracy of the North" with the "spacious, leisured, orderly" life of the Confederacy, Agar called for a revival of Jeffersonian politics.

Agar argued that the answer to the problems of America during the 1930s could not be found in liberalism, which was "too tentative, too lacking in the courage to go boldly to the right or to the left." The nation needed a conservative revolution, one modeled on the statesmanship of the Founding Fathers, to destroy the power of the monied oligarchy, to purge the political system of the results of mass democracy, to repulse the collectivism of the radicals of Union Square and the Harvard Yard, and to provide a government "neither tyrannous nor venal."

Tate warmly welcomed Agar to the Agrarian fold. His picture of the effect of plutocracy on modern politics, his praise of the South and Calhoun, and his call for a peaceful conservative revolution were grist for the Agrarian mill. Tate believed that Agar had a firm grasp "of the real forces that have made modern America." He immediately wrote to Agar proposing an alliance with the Agrarians to combat the belief in the inevitability of collectivism and "the pseudo-meta-

physical dogma of capitalist-communist philosophy." Tate argued that Americans "can still make the kind of society they want.... Machine technology has not changed the political nature of man."

Tate's overtures confirmed Agar's confidence that traditional American values were still alive and well in the hinterland, and they encouraged him to explore the possibility of founding a political movement to restore a propertied society. Initially he wished to establish an agrarian-decentralist weekly national magazine similar in format to the left-wing *Nation* and *New Republic*. He had to shelve this idea when he joined the editorial staff of the *Courier-Journal* in 1935, and instead he hoped that the paper's editorial page could disseminate conservative ideas throughout the upper South and Middle West.

The entente between Agar and Tate was further cemented in 1935 when Agar's *Land of the Free* appeared. This volume clearly established him as America's foremost proponent of a propertied society. Economic collectivism, the Kentuckian wrote, was not inevitable. It had occurred because of greed and faulty statesmanship.

Most Americans would still rather own a store, a work shop, or a farm than be an employee, even if that meant a lower standard of living. Only a lack of will prevented a propertied revolution. No economic system was inevitable, nor was modern technology incompatible with the widespread ownership of property. The United States, Agar confidently declared, could again become "a nation with a majority of small proprietors, with no all-powerful plutocracy at the top and no large proletarian class at the bottom." The first politician who appealed to the public's ideals and rejected the politics of palliatives and relief payments "will get a response that surprises him. My prayer is...that he will be a man who chooses to revive America."

In *Land of the Free* Agar praised the Agrarians for remaining true to American values, for rejecting the deracinated materialism of the metropolis, and for pointing out the spiritual wasteland of modern industrialism. The Agrarians, he wrote, were the only American intellectuals "who dared bet on America's future."

Agar's praise of the Agrarians pleased Tate, and he enthusiastically responded to Agar's suggestion for a sequel to *I'll Take My Stand* which would be less Southern in orientation and more focused on economic and political matters. Agar believed the United States stood at a political crossroads in the mid-1930s. The liberalism of the New Deal was unacceptable since it accepted the basic outlines of finance capitalism and merely wished to ameliorate its more egregious failings. Its attempt to retain democracy while doing nothing to restore property ownership was merely crisis legislation which "pro-

longs the present disequilibrium." Both communism and fascism were unacceptable because they rejected democracy and supported economic centralization. This left only a conservatism which defended property ownership, regionalism, and Agrarianism. To Agar, anti-plutocratic, anti-collectivist conservatism was the only defense against the servile state.

Tate shared Agar's political forebodings and agreed with him that the proposed book, if it was to have any impact, could not be a Southern volume along the lines of *I'll Take My Stand*. It would have to be national in scope with contributors from throughout the nation. He could echo the introduction to *I'll Take My Stand*, which posed the question, "How may the Southern and the Western Agrarians unite for effective action?" Agar's proposed manifesto was one answer, but it was not an answer welcomed by all the Agrarians.

Since 1930 the Agrarians had planned to publish a second symposium which would counter the charge that they were fanciful enthusiasts. This would offer concrete and practical suggestions for advancing Agrarianism. All the essays were to be written by Southerners and were to concern the social and cultural condition of the South. Agar's proposal would obviously pre-empt this second Agrarian effort. Donald Davidson and Frank L. Owsley, the two most militant Southerners among the Agrarians, strenuously protested Tate's cooperation with Agar, fearing that Agrarianism was about to be engulfed by a broader decentralist-Agrarian movement.

Davidson was particularly miffed since he had taken the lead in trying to get the second Agrarian book off the ground. Unfortunately, no major New York publisher was interested in publishing a sequel to *I'll Take My Stand* because of doubts regarding its commercial possibilities. Even the University of North Carolina, the South's most distinguished university press, turned Davidson down. "No publisher is in sight for the symposium," Davidson lamented in 1934, "and nothing is being done about it, or very likely will be done." Davidson's failure to find a publisher did not reconcile him to Agar's proposal, nor did it overcome his fear that the Agrarians were about to become the tail to Agar's conservative kite, a fear shared by Owsley. Tate, however, believed Davidson's inability to secure a publisher made it imperative that the Agrarians cooperate with Agar if they were to have any influence. "We've got to put up or shut up. We can't go on writing our pleasant laments for our consumption," he told Davidson. "We've got to get into action or admit that we are licked. The whole agrarian movement has become a reproach. Of course we can say privately that we don't care, but if we don't care

what public opinion makes of us, why do we write for public opinion?" It had been half a decade since *I'll Take My Stand* had appeared, "and I am damned to hell if we have accomplished anything as a group."

While Tate worked on Davidson, Agar sought to mollify Owsley. He explained that there was as yet no publisher for the second Agrarian book, that the Agar-Tate book would not pre-empt another Agrarian symposium, and that the agrarian-decentralist movement would forfeit a golden opportunity to influence American politics if it should delay coming out with a manifesto. "The few of us who have the right ideas about our misdirected country," Agar told Owsley, "ought to show a united front, ought to do all in our power to encourage our friends in high places—of whom there are at the moment more than have been here for a long time." Although still skeptical, Owsley agreed to contribute.

Tate attempted to overcome Davidson's fear that the defense of the South would necessarily be muted in any sequel to *I'll Take My Stand* which was not an exclusively Agrarian undertaking. He assured Davidson of Agar's support for Agrarianism and sectionalism, emphasized the benefit to the South of the proposed book and advised Davidson to cease "sulking" and become part of a project which could revive a dormant Agrarianism. "Our purpose is to be heard, and we can't be heard now if our program is set forth as primarily sectional.... Our choice lies between a temporary disguise for our ultimate objective, in which case we can get attention, and writing avowedly sectional articles to be read chiefly by ourselves."

*Who Owns America?* never had the political impact Agar and Tate sought. Regionalism, economic and demographic decentralization, and the restoration of property failed to receive any significant support in Washington. Thus one of the few opportunities in recent American history to create a national political and intellectual conservative movement was lost. The country was left with a choice between the dubious makeshift panaceas of the New Deal and the nostrums of the snake oil salesmen of the Left.

Although *Who Owns America?* did not appeal to the American intelligentsia, its vision of the good life has proven to be more popular among the American public than that of its collectivist and technocratic critics. The most important social development of the past half century has been the demographic decentralization and back-to-the-land phenomenon called suburbanization. The era of America's industrial cities has ended. Every recent census has noted the dramatic decline of population in Boston, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and

other urban centers. Indeed the term "greater Detroit," one wag has noted, is an oxymoron. Suburbanization has enabled millions of American families to own productive property, to raise flowers and vegetables, and to experience a saner relationship to Nature. Our current president has a ranch, his predecessor owns a peanut warehouse, and every true American possesses at least one pair of blue jeans, the uniform of rural America.

Similarly, *Who Owns America?*'s defense of small business does not appear to be out of place in a nation which every year witnesses a smaller percentage of its workers involved in large-scale manufacturing. Small business, whether one is talking about morticians, independent insurance salesmen, or palmists, remains an important and dynamic element in the economy. Nor has regionalism been overwhelmed by a leviathan-like collectivist state. One can imagine that Agar, Tate, Davidson and Owsley would not have been completely displeased with a nation whose richest citizen lives in Bentonville, Arkansas and drives around in a pickup truck and whose most famous religious leaders reside in Virginia and preach that old-time religion.

### Reminiscence

*Andrew Lytle is generally recognized as the "dean of Southern Agrarians," not only because of his long-term fidelity to The Cause, but because he, more than any other member of the original group, has been able to define the religious and philosophical dogmas that have given formal meaning to the South.*

Not much more is needed to add to Mr. Shapiro's interpretation. It happened I was the only other Agrarian present at the time the discussion first took place between Allen Tate and Herbert Agar. Both Tate and I had read *The People's Choice*. I thought to write Agar and didn't. But Tate did. The Tates and I were together a great deal in those days, and we frequently took the long drive from Ben Folly to St. Matthews, a suburb of Louisville, where the Agars had taken a house. Senator Bingham was retiring as ambassador to the English court and had persuaded Agar to return to this country with the understanding that he would succeed Mr. Robinson as editor of the *Courier-Journal*, still one of the most distinguished newspapers in the country. It was Bingham who had made it so by defending the tobacco farmers during the Night Rider days. Unfortunately the edi-

tor delayed or seemed reluctant to retire. As Agar waited, he wrote a column for the paper. He may even have had the title of editor. I don't remember. He also spoke to women's clubs for a fee, welcome money in the Depression. The word spread among the ladies that he was a handsome Lincoln and spoke beautifully.

During the long evenings of high discourse, which lasted until the roosters crowed, he told us about his father and his uncle. After Appomattox, his father went to New York and became a distinguished lawyer, but his uncle remained in New Orleans, and there he said defeat was worse than he could have imagined and killed himself. Herbert's sympathy was with his uncle. This and the nature of our talk led us to believe we had at hand the Agrarian public figure, since none of the contributors to *I'll Take My Stand* fitted the role, or wanted to.

But the talks were not altogether of economics and political relationships. We told tales that could only come from the world we were defending and hoped to preserve, and of course the society we had been born into, that of counties and towns, held together by animals and trains. Eleanor Agar had an uncle, Major Chilton, brother to Senator Chilton of West Virginia. This gentleman lived openly in Charles Town with a female descendant of the Hatfields and the McCoys, to the scandal of certain citizens. His brother spoke to him with these words, "Why don't you marry the woman," and was answered with these, "Great God, I can't live with her as it is." Once running for public office (women didn't vote at that time) a heckler accused him of this "mesalliance." The Major paused, drew in his breath and said, "I didn't enter this race a gelding," and proceeded with his speech.

There were many such talks and related discussions and various appetites. We ate well at night, but the Agars were dieting, very proud (and naturally so) of their figures. For lunch the food was an excellent salad, but after long hours of no sleep and much spirit salads merely increased certain appetites. Allen and I slipped off and got chocolate milk shakes, or ice cream sodas. Caroline said of him he would enter an ice cream parlor with the abandon most men entered a bar.

I merely relate these incidents because nothing takes place in a vacuum. I doubt if the book would have been printed, if we hadn't all met at the thirsty hour in Nashville, at Jimmy Waller's mother's house, she being away. It is rarely mentioned, but the great worth of the Agrarian group was the society we made. We liked one another. We were the same kind of people, and we usually met socially as well

as for discussion. Sometimes for a party, or set-back or a little poker.

For me these were halcyon days. I had just finished *The Long Night*, and the Agar household was reading the manuscript. Everybody praised it and made me think I had written the real thing. Never again would there be such a moment. A friend of Agar's was there at the time, Douglas Jerrold, an English Catholic and head of the publishing house of Eyre and Spottiswoode. He was a writer as well. He had flown Franco from Africa to Spain to make his revolution. He moved slowly, with grace and dignity. He was carrying lead in fourteen places from the First World War. He became my English publisher, but the importance was this: through him Belloc had a piece in *Who Owns America?*, joining the Agrarians and the English Distributists, both with the same understanding of a common plight. The distress and danger was not merely local. But nothing was made of this.

After about seven years the group scattered. We had our own work to do. Herbert in New York planned a magazine of a popular but serious nature. I, and I think the Tates, understood it that the Agrarians would be the contributors. I had something for the first issue, but when I learned that the Cooperatives and Ralph Borsodi had been recruited, I wired to have my piece withdrawn and wrote a long letter, which the Tates read before I sent it off.

Frank Owsley's earlier interpretation of Herbert's intentions seemed justified. I don't think that now. I think he had high ambitions, but you don't get to be president by talking to women's clubs for a fee. You better know the squires, the local politicians and what speaking you do, do it in those back rooms of country hotels, where sand boxes serve for spittoons and other boxes hold clean corncobs as well as Sears Roebuck catalogues. At least before you address "the people." Nor was it handsome features that elected Lincoln. Herbert needed a Colonel House.

I think now more was expected of *Who Owns America?* than it could have delivered. An idea of a revolutionary nature takes longer to spread. It takes a catastrophic situation. Those who were sympathetic to the Agrarian argument could not believe that the world they inhabited could disappear. Well it has. Look to the West, with the disappearance of farms, foreclosures, machinery too expensive for the returns of land, and of course this does not stop at foreclosure of farms. It threatens all those who serve the farmers and the places which make up the communities. The western states, the most mechanized—that is the most industrialized—present the most dramatic plights. Agribusiness is the perfect definition for what has taken place. If the West had joined with the South during the Northern

invasion, as did the Copperheads, history would present a different face in this country. But the West did not clearly see their own interests. They mistook a geographical union for a political one.

For further consideration: *I'll Take My Stand* was a Manifesto, with a statement of principles, sustained by the essays. *Who Owns America?* had two men as authors, even though they were editors. This made it just another book.

## Hindsight

*Troy Cauley was born in Comanche, Texas; but he has spent much of his life in such exotic places as Wisconsin and Indiana. He brought to Who Owns America? a solid background in economics, having already published Agrarianism: A Program for Farming and served in the federal government as an economist and soil conservationist.*

When the *Southern Partisan* graciously asked me to do a short essay on Professor Shapiro's paper on *Who Owns America?*, I got out my ancient copy of the book and sketched through it for the first time in many years. I must admit that I was immodestly surprised at how well the contributors, including myself, had analyzed our condition at the time in which we wrote and how validly we had forecast the future of the economic, political, and social aspects of this country.

In the fifty years that have passed since we put this book together, much, of course, has happened—the end of the Great Depression, World War II, “reconversion,” the baby boom, the Korean War, integration, the atomic revolution, the Vietnam War, the Reagan Revival, the Great Recession of the early 1980s, the swelling of the federal deficit to astronomic proportions, chronic inflation, the computer craze, the cultural monstrosity of television, and a lot of other things. But some things have remained pretty much the same—economic instability; chronic unemployment; inner-city decay; compounded pollution of the air, water, and soil; crime; drug addiction; and international distrust. Clearly it has been a mixed bag.

The Agrarians and the Distributists who contributed to *Who Owns America?* wanted a nation of independent land-owning farmers with a relatively high degree of self-sufficiency, comparatively small business enterprises operating in a “free market,” as nearly free a choice of vocation as is consistent with the general welfare (admittedly difficult of precise determination), and a genuine democracy in government as against government by PACs. Obviously we

did not achieve these goals by writing and publishing the book. Some people have called the undertaking an exercise in futility. Others have called it even worse names.

But was it an utter failure? It was not. At least we gave the people of America fair warning. We foresaw the collapse of the "smoke-stack cities" of the Northeast and the Midwest. We foresaw the impossibility of the success of "factory farming," a system in which the farmer becomes a manufacturer without the ability to control either the volume of his output or the prices at which his equipment and supplies are purchased and his products sold. The current catastrophe in the agriculture of the Midwest, dragging down small-town banks and other businesses with it, is ample evidence of the essential failure of technological progress to solve the problems of agriculture in an industrial economy.

Technological progress in the past half century has been outstanding in the field of transportation. Let's illustrate it. When I was a small boy in central Texas we lived about nine miles from the county seat, a town of three or four thousand people. In the fall we took a bale of cotton to town in a wagon. With a load of this sort, the team of horses walked about four miles an hour along the dirt road, thus taking a little over two hours for the trip. A short time ago I flew from Texas to California in a 747 jet in about the same length of time. That looks like incredible progress. Let's examine it more closely.

On the flight to California I saw virtually nothing of the country. From an elevation of 36,000 feet, all we saw were some weather-beaten clouds. Our seats were narrow and jammed together, but I visited with no one. Nobody showed any interest in me. I was in a crowd but it was a very lonely crowd.

On the trip to town with the bale of cotton we visited with fellow-travelers along the way. We exchanged hearty greetings with neighbors as they sat on their porches. My brother and I had the whole back-end of the wagon in which to roll, tumble, and wrestle. We saw field-larks in the pastures and heard their cheerful calls. Bob-white quail thundered out of the bushes along the fencerows. Jackrabbits raced off for the cover of the post-oaks. The trip was a big success even before we got to town.

In a sense, of course, all of this is trivial. But in a broader sense, it is highly illustrative of a basic fact: human nature is better adapted to a simple technology than to a highly complex one. People cannot live happily in a society of bread and circuses, especially when the bread has little or no nutritional value and the circuses consist mainly of endless hours of television depicting violence, vulgarity, and un-

classified stupidity. The movies aren't much (if any) better. A large part of the use of alcohol and other drugs can be traced to a basic cause: boredom. Boredom bred of routine factory jobs, impersonal "personal services" jobs, watching spectator sports instead of participating in true play, "dating" with uninteresting and generally inadequate partners, driving to and from a detested job through ever-growing traffic jams; you can expand the list for yourself.

I must concede that we who wrote the book did not have immediate and precise remedies for all of these problems; but we saw clearly the general direction in which we should move. We wrote a rather good prescription. Of course, we couldn't force the patients to take the medicine. But some of them, I think, now wish that they had. One quite significant concession I must make: the technology of medical care has improved enormously in the past half century. The net result is that on the average we now live longer than people used to do. To what purpose is debatable.

As of right now, the biggest single difference between our present situation and that of fifty years ago is that we have a great deal more garbage to dispose of than we had then; and some of it (toxic atomic waste, for example) presents especially complicated problems. The next big assignment for technology is to clean up the horrendous mess which it has already made. Gung ho! for progress.

## Questions

*Cleanth Brooks is a literary critic and teacher, perhaps the most distinguished in our time. Yet, during his lengthy career—first at Louisiana State University, later at Yale—he has always been willing to speak out in behalf of those social and religious principles he deemed of overriding importance. Thus he has been an advocate of the South while practicing his profession in New England and a defender of Christian orthodoxy during a period of widespread intellectual skepticism.*

I have had the advantage of reading Andrew Lytle's comments on *Who Owns America?* and also those of T. J. Cauley. They have together said so much that needed to be said about the book that I shall be rather brief.

Some years earlier than the publication of this book, when *I'll Take My Stand* was being put together, several of the contributors, notably R. P. Warren and Allen Tate, were unhappy with the title,

which suggested that the problems were specifically Southern, whereas they saw them as more deeply seated and, indeed, universal. They would have preferred a title like *Tracts Against Communism*.

So from the beginning, some of the Agrarians saw the conflict at hand as one to save civilization and not merely to save the South. Their second book sought to broaden the basis of their appeal and to seek allies from outside the Southern states, from both the United States and Great Britain; hence, for example, contributors from the British Distributists and Roman Catholic intellectuals like Douglas Jerrold and Hilaire Belloc.

Many of the individual essays are good, and when read today, fifty years later, seem prophetic. But the book did not capture a much wider audience, and the broadening of the base of its appeal could be interpreted as a dilution of its total impact. The people of the United States were not prepared to listen to what the contributors had to say and may not be ready today; for acceptance would involve questioning the basic tenets of the present order and even the conception of the good life.

I stress this last phrase, for in 1952, when the magazine *Shenandoah* asked the Agrarians whether they would now, twenty-two years later, continue to maintain the Agrarian position, nearly all of those who replied said "Yes," but added that, writing now, they would base their position primarily on a philosophical-religious rather than on an economic-political platform. That is certainly still my own position, though the concept of man and reality implied in the Agrarian position has certain clear economic implications.

What did the two books published by the Agrarians accomplish, if anything? Obviously nothing immediate and easily recognizable. But some of the questions they raised are now becoming evident and even urgent. For example, the precept that man must respect, and even love, nature—not prey upon it, ravage it, but accommodate his life (including his economic life) to it—has been little heeded. It's the stuff of poetry, not political life, most people would say. But the hundreds of toxic waste dumps all over this country and the dead and dying lakes of New York state, Massachusetts and northeastern Canada say plainly that an outraged nature knows how to avenge itself.

To take another example: it may not be healthy for too many of us to become salesmen, public relations men, and ad writers, especially if the quality of the goods we vend becomes relatively unimportant and the volume of things sold all important.

A blind faith in progress may not be healthy either. If we all be-

lieve in going forward (*pro-gressus*) but, lulled by the feeling that we are in motion, never ask what is the real direction in which we are traveling, we may be headed into our own modern version of the Dark Ages.

In short, the Agrarians are most important for the questions they raised. If we don't like some of their proposed answers, it's high time that we found some ourselves. The questions won't go away.

That is why I am unhappy with the conclusion of Mr. Shapiro's article. I have profited from reading his account of the early exchanges among the editors and some of the principal contributors to *Who Owns America?* I was at that time living in Baton Rouge, far from Nashville which was at the center of such activity. But surely Shapiro cannot be serious when he sets forth the evidence for the impact of Agrarian ideas on American society. Mr. Shapiro mentions the present popularity of country living and the joys of modern suburbia. Even President Reagan owns a ranch and loves it, and the kind of trousers worn by the formerly disparaged farmer has become almost a national uniform.

But the Agrarians did not have in mind the luxuries of Hilton Head or even those of suburbia. President Reagan uses his ranch for holidays, and why not? But day-to-day life on a working ranch is something else again. I have relatives who are working ranchers. They love it, but it is far from being pure recreation for them.

Agriculture has too often become Agribusiness, and the Agribusinessman, usually deep in debt to the local banker and dependent on the vicissitudes of the weather, finds his business the chanciest of all. As for blue jeans as our national uniform: whether skin-tights or designer jeans, they are designed for a more shapely seat than that found on a hay wagon or a tractor.

Perhaps Mr. Shapiro's evidence is not meant to be taken seriously, but only as an ironical commentary on what American agricultural life is not. Yet I fear that Shapiro cannot be speaking ironically when he writes: "One can imagine that Agar, Tate, Davidson, and Owsley would not have been completely displeased" with the preaching of the Reverend Mr. Falwell. I knew all these men, three of them very well, and I, for one, can't imagine any of them regarding such preaching as having any relation to what they hoped for in the South. ☆

## Of Myths and Monkeys

Warren Leamon

1985

Every night at the dinner table my father argued with my grandmother. They argued about everything so naturally they turned from time to time to religion. Grandmother, who never went to church, always took the Fundamentalist position and insisted that the Bible, word for word, is literally true. My father, who never went to church either, was an amateur agnostic and insisted that though he didn't know much about religion, he damn well knew that there were things in the Bible that couldn't have happened. My mother, who did go to church and who read the Bible regularly, stayed out of it except to try to calm them down when they started shouting, which they invariably did. Finally one night, my father, who had probably read an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, asked, "Where did Cain get his wife?"

Grandmother, suspecting a trap, replied, "What difference does that make?"

"The Bible says that he killed his brother Abel and went to the land of Nod, and then he married. Now there was only Adam and Eve and Cain. So where did he get his wife?"

"The Lord provided one," Grandmother lamely answered.

"No!" shouted my father and he banged his fist on the table. "I'll tell you where he got her. He wandered off to Africa and married an ape and that's how we got the theory of evolution."

I've always thought that that was one of his finest moments. And when I first heard of the "monkey trial," I remembered my father's splendid instantaneous creation of a myth that still seems to me to be as good as, if not better than, the one that has dominated the popular conception of the trial: that in the Fundamentalist South in the summer of 1925 science and religion clashed and though religion won the trial, science carried the day. For the true significance of that trial in Dayton lies in the fact that it is one of the earliest examples of the process whereby the media, industry and the political establishment join to manufacture a "myth."

As Ray Ginger has demonstrated (*Six Days or Forever?*), hardly anyone in Tennessee took the antievolution law seriously. The science textbook approved by the state included chapters on evolution and even when the textbook was changed after the law was passed, the new book included chapters on evolution. John Thomas Scopes, who challenged the law, was well liked in the town. George Rappel-

yea, who persuaded Scopes to go to court and who managed the local factory, cared little about evolution one way or the other; he was looking for a way to bring new business to Dayton. The A.C.L.U.'s main aim was not to keep evolution in the schools but—as later events were to prove—to keep religion out of them (never mind that the state of Tennessee already prohibited the teaching of the Bible in the schools). Clarence Darrow was out to get William Jennings Bryan. And Bryan seemed as interested in selling real estate in Florida as he was in protecting the morals of the young. After the trial the state supreme court intensified the farce by upholding the law but overturning the conviction, Scopes went off to Chicago to graduate school (this made possible by the fame he received from the trial), Bryan died, Darrow went on practicing law, the Fundamentalists went on excoriating science, and teachers all over the country went on teaching evolution.

Aside from the location, there was not even anything particularly Southern about the trial: Darrow and Bryan were Middlewesterners, as was Scopes, more or less; Rappelyea and most of the defense lawyers were Yankees; only the judge and prosecuting lawyers were Southerners—and they were more interested in politics than they were in evolution or the Bible.

The notion that the trial pitted the Apostles of truth against the force and authority of the reactionary state—something similar to the trial of Galileo—is simply ludicrous. The state of Tennessee is hardly comparable to the Vatican and anyway, it had never been able, nor had it tried, to stop the teaching of evolution. The very idea of Clarence Darrow and Roger Baldwin (head of the A.C.L.U.) as advocates of the truth is laughable. Finally, as Weaver pointed out long ago (*The Ethics of Rhetoric*), the state took the dialectical (scientific) position and the defense (science) took the rhetorical position.

In short, the trial was show business from beginning to end and while the *New York Times*—which certainly knew better—tried to present it as a serious moral and legal confrontation, the good people of Dayton saw it for what it was and seemed to have a whooping good time, cheering first one side, then the other. As far as they were concerned, Scopes could teach what he damn well pleased but no jury of twelve in Dayton, Tennessee, had to agree with him.

What occurred in Dayton 60 years ago was not a confrontation between science and religion but a confrontation between pseudoscience and pseudo-religion. The Fundamentalist position espoused by Bryan had existed only since the turn of the century and its reduction of Christianity to five "fundamentals" was matched in sim-

plemindedness only by Darrow's contention that ultimate truth resides in scientific fact. Thus, when Bryan announced that he would go to Dayton to aid the prosecution and Scopes selected Darrow as one of his lawyers, the trial lost any chance of becoming a test between religion and science. Rather it became simply another—somewhat humorous—event in a conflict stretching back to the beginning of the Oxford Movement in England in the 1830s.

Why, then, has the "monkey trial" become a part of American folklore, a legendary—even epic—event? To answer the question, we should ask ourselves another one: Why is the brief Kennedy presidency still thought of as Camelot? In both instances the answer is the same—because the image, the myth, preceded the reality. Despite his America firstism and his devotion to all the middle class attitudes towards life and sex, Kennedy came into office as the harbinger of a new order; and despite the fact that his real accomplishments were the reducing of tariffs and the lowering of taxes, he remains fixed in the American mind as the very embodiment of idealism. Similarly, even before the Scopes trial began, the champions of "progress" created the myth to which the trial would be shaped: the forces of reason against the forces of religion. That reason was represented by a lawyer whose knowledge of science consisted of a keen interest in it, fueled by weekly lectures given to his little club by professors from the University of Chicago; and that religion was represented by a dying politician—neither of these facts deterred the mythmakers. And after the trial, which proved nothing, the myth grew stronger and stronger. Only recently *Time* brought it up in an article on contemporary Fundamentalism. Nothing is more pitiful than the spectacle of modern man denouncing religion as nothing more than superstition even as he elevates one mediocrity after another to the level of the gods.

The central figure in the creation of the myth was, of course, H.L. Mencken. Though he was in on the early planning of the trial, his dispatches from Dayton were curiously confused, at times incoherent and—most damning of all—almost never funny. At first unsettled by Dayton, which did not fit his stereotype of a Southern town, he sensed the show business atmosphere and seemed to realize that the Tennesseans weren't taking the trial seriously. His intellectual honesty battled with his Nietzschean elitism and gradually the latter won out. Perhaps he managed to fool himself. Did he really believe that there were no moonshiners in Dayton? Did he really believe that the crowds were moved by the *substance* of Darrow's speeches? Whether Mencken was (God forbid) naive or devious, the result was a series of articles which fit the scenario—ignorant bumpkins inca-

pable of grasping the enlightenment of science. From our perspective Mencken seems not a detached observer of the action but an integral part of the farce. Scopes' memoir of the event (in *D-Days at Dayton*), though it never mentions him, makes him seem as comical as the people he caricatured.

Nevertheless, the image Mencken shaped the events to has survived so that today the average man tends to conceive of Creationists, in large part middle class white collar workers, as Southern rednecks (though Mencken never made much of the Southernness of the Tennesseans; he preferred to see them as typical small town Americans). The titles of works about the trial (*Six Days or Forever?*, *D-Days at Dayton*, *Inherit the Wind*) embody the myth.

Shorn of the spurious myth that has dominated later interpretations of it, the trial emerges as a conflict between populists and anarchists. What motivated Bryan was not merely his hatred of evolution theory. As a matter of fact, he turned to Fundamentalism late in his career and though he was probably sincere in his conversion he nonetheless saw Fundamentalism as an expression of the popular will that he had always felt he was called upon to serve. For Bryan, the trial was another battle in the great war of the common man against the evil Eastern establishment.

Darrow's political philosophy was not all that different from Bryan's. The prosecution (and Weaver in his essay) made much of Darrow's defense of Leopold and Loeb, pointing out that in that famous trial he emphasized that education can lead the individual into evil acts. In the Scopes trial, on the other hand, he argued the opposite: absolute freedom of inquiry leads to the truth. But in another sense, Darrow was consistent; in both instances he championed the cause of the individual against society. For Darrow, the trial was another battle in the anarchists' war against social and political institutions.

But the myth lives on, primarily because 1) Fundamental protestantism cannot, by its very nature, acknowledge any human authority in spiritual matters (thus it obscures the fact that any interpretation of the Bible, literal or otherwise, is subject to the fallibility of man); 2) secularism, by its very nature, cannot acknowledge any authority other than reason (thus it obscures the fact that reason can and often does lead to evil). Underlying the current battle between Creationists and scientists is a raw struggle for power in which blind faith in God struggles with blind faith in reason. The battle has come about in large measure because the state has immersed itself so deeply in education that parents cannot affect the moral atmosphere of schools except through the dynamics of democ-

ratic (power) politics. As long as parents have to send their children to public schools, the state will have to take sides: it must either accommodate the parents (taxpayers) or force the parents to give in to the "experts," most of whom are financed in one way or another by the state.

The trial at Dayton is thought to have exposed the intellectual poverty of religion. In fact, it exposed the dilemma a free society finds itself in when the government becomes involved in the indoctrination of the young. The trial produced the sorry spectacle of a dying populist and a devious anarchist doing battle over something neither knew very much about. It also produced the spectacle of Gilbert Murray, the eminent classical scholar, claiming that the trial would be "the most serious setback to civilization in all history." Thus Darwin does make monkeys of us all. ☆

**Why Yankees Won't (and Can't) Leave the South Alone**      **1985**  
*Forrest McDonald*

Southerners rarely while away their leisure hours by contemplating Yankees, for there is no point in thinking of unpleasant things if one is not obliged to do so. Yet the practice does have value; to some extent, at least, we are defined by those attributes which set us apart from others, and sometimes we can be made aware of such attributes only by observing people who do not share them. Another virtue of thinking about Yankees, in the long run perhaps a more important one, is that it serves to remind us that they have repeatedly tried to make us over in their own image. Indeed, though it may seem that they have been off our backs since the demise of the civil rights movement, their latest campaign to reform us is actually well under way.

What is there about us that has made us so offensive to them? Or, conversely, what is there about them that has compelled them to meddle in our affairs? The late great Richard M. Weaver, in *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, addressed himself to analyzing the qualities that distinguish South from North, and for the nineteenth century he was perfectly on target. "The North had Tom Paine and his postulates assuming the virtuous inclinations of man," Weaver wrote; "the South had Burke and his doctrine of human fallibility and of the organic nature of society." The North embraced rationalism and egalitarianism; the South had a "deep suspicion of all theory, perhaps of intellect," and clung to a hierarchical and deferential social order. The North bowed down before science and material progress; the South "persisted in regarding science as a false messiah," and remained into "our own time" (the 1940s) "*the last non-materialist civilization in the Western World.*"

Penetrating as Weaver's analysis was, however, it is accurate for only one phase of Yankee history. The Yankees were the way they were long before they began to worship the Almighty Dollar, and their intellectual heirs are still that way even though most of them now espouse socialism or some approximation of it. The psyche of the Yankee — by which I do not mean all Northerners, but only seventeenth-century New England Puritans and their descendants, both genetic and ideological—has roots that run deep, and ultimately to the Yankee's ever-changing concept of the nature of God. Thus it is that, in regard to the shaping of the New England character, various errors, heresies, nay even blasphemies, figure prominently. To get a handle on the Yankee, it is helpful to begin with his original Calvinism, and especially with the doctrine of predestination: the belief

that most men are doomed and a few are elected for salvation, not by faith or works or any other act of human volition, but only in accordance with a preordained and unknowable divine plan. It might seem that that premise precludes speculation by the puny human intellect, that is, logical disputation, and inspires unlimited arrogance.

For instance, during the seventeenth century the prevailing orthodoxy was that those who were chosen for salvation would lead visibly pious lives, but it could be argued, as Anne Hutchinson did argue, that if the grace of God were in a person it made no difference how he behaved on earth. Such a doctrine was subversive both of community-enforced morality and of community-enforced order, and could not be tolerated. Hutchinson and her followers were banished, as were others who deviated or dissented in any way; and yet deviation and dissent were endemic.

That is the first thing to understand about the Yankee: he is a doctrinal puritan, characterized by what William G. McLaughlin has called pietistic perfectionism. Unlike the Southerner, he is constitutionally incapable of letting things be, of adopting a live-and-let-live attitude. No departure from his version of Truth is tolerable, and thus when he finds himself amidst sinners, as he invariably does, he must either purge and purify the community or join with his fellow saints and go into the wilderness to establish a New Jerusalem. In other words, he must reform society or secede from it; and though he has long since been thoroughly secularized, the compulsion remains as strong in the twentieth century as it was in the seventeenth.

A second and related characteristic of the Yankee is that, as others have pointed out, he is a gnostic. Adherents of this heresy in ancient times regarded themselves as privy to "knowledge of the divine mysteries reserved to an elite"; the original Puritan counterpart was the Elect. The essence of gnosticism as a mindset is the absolute, unquestioning certainty that one is possessed of the Truth. Now it may be objected that there is nothing peculiar to the Yankee about this, for many and possibly most Southerners are unquestioning in their religious faith. But there are profound differences. One is that Southerners have always confined their belief in their certain knowledge to a few simple points of religious faith which are accessible to all, whereas the content of the Yankee's Truth was esoteric and perennially shifting, even before it was secularized.

The example of the Reverend Aaron Burr (father of the political scoundrel of the same name) is instructive. In his youth Burr believed in free will and engaged in a great deal of uneasy negotiation with God, having "great Terrors and horrors from a guilty Con-

science and the Fears of Hell" and obtaining "Relief by Promises and Resolutions." In college he reasoned himself "into a More thorough Reformation," read a number of suitable books, and "soon began to be well pleas'd with my Self"; at that stage he pitied the contemptible "Ignorance" of the evangelicals around him. In time, however, he had a conversion experience, abandoned the Arminian notion of free will, and adopted "the Calvinistical Doctrine"; and though he confessed that parts of that doctrine were beyond his ken he nonetheless had "an inward Sense of these Truths."

Burr's transition from one certainty to another took place during the Great Awakening, which represented a profound break with seventeenth-century dogma; a generation later the Yankees embraced totalitarian republicanism and thought thereby to establish God's kingdom on earth. Lest this seem a trifle exaggerated even to confirmed Yankee-haters, I submit the following words from John Adams, written on the eve of independence. Republican government, Adams wrote, is superior to all others, if its principles are pure. But it "is only to be supported by pure Religion or austere Morals. Public Virtue cannot exist in a Nation without private, and public Virtue is the only Foundation of Republics. There must be a positive Passion for the public good, the public Interest, Honour, Power, and Glory, established in the Minds of the People, or there can be no Republican Government, *nor any real Liberty.*" This public passion, he added, "must be Superior to all private Passions. Men must be ready, they must pride themselves, and be happy to sacrifice their private Pleasures, Passions, and Interests, nay, their private Friendships and dearest Connections, when they stand in Competition with the Rights of Society."

Before the end of the century that same John Adams was writing with the same dogmatic certainty that limited monarchy was the best guarantor of "real liberty," and his fellow Yankees were simultaneously embracing Unitarianism and materialism with equal self-assurance. And so on, generation after generation, even unto our own benighted epoch, in which Ivy League professors and presidents solemnly assure us that there are no inborn differences between men and women and that people who object to homosexuality and abortion-on-demand are religious fanatics. They are always wrong—or at least they cannot, by definition, have been right more than once—and yet they are always utterly certain and utterly impervious to argument.

Another difference between Southern and Yankee "certain knowledge" is more subtle and more important. The religious Southerner's

conviction is normally a source of inner peace and contentment to him; and though a spirit of Christian charity may inspire him to share the joys of his faith, and even to spread the Gospel around the globe, he is devoid of the urge to force his faith upon others. Moreover, Southern missionaries have usually been interested only in saving souls, not in remaking societies. Not so with the Yankees, and in a brilliant book called *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience and the Self in Early America*, the historian Philip Greven has analyzed the reasons. After predestination went out of vogue in colonial New England, the new orthodoxy was that grace was a free gift from God, bestowed upon those He decided to save. As Jonathan Edwards preached in a sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," people "have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God." Total submission and surrender, as Greven summarizes it, "were the only terms acceptable to God."

Quite apart from the lack of logic in such a theology (if God saves souls capriciously, it cannot matter to Him whether people are submissive or not) and apart from the presumptuousness (in insisting that God will save only those who adopt a particular stance and that one knows what that stance is), this was not an easy message even for Yankees to swallow, for abject submission does not come naturally to man. To give nature a helping hand, parents systematically (and brutally) dedicated themselves to "breaking the will" of their children. And thus, Greven suggests, though Yankees were taught to suppress all anger, "feelings of anger and of rage, of resistance and of rebellion surged inside them." Moreover, they projected their inadmissible feelings of anger within the self upon the outside world. Consequently, "by becoming soldiers for Christ and warring against the unregenerated people of the world," they could "vent their anger and aggression on people who were neither their parents nor their God but who, nevertheless, by symbolizing both sin and authority, provided legitimate outlets for the hostility and rage suppressed so long." Thus Cromwell is the Yankee's prototype: seek the heathen out, give him a chance to save himself by embracing the prevailing Truth, and if he rejects the opportunity then run him through with a bayonet.

That predisposition was reinforced by a related aspect of what the late Perry Miller called the New England Mind. One of the forms that ancient gnosticism took was Manichaeism—the belief in two gods, a god of light and pure goodness and a god of darkness and pure evil—and a form of Manichaeism became firmly rooted in the Yankee char-

acter. In purely theological terms, of course, a variety of Manichaeism is also central to the religious beliefs of many Southerners: the human soul is a battleground in which God and the Devil perpetually contend for supremacy. But as with gnosticism, there are fundamental differences. To Southerners the struggle against evil is spiritual and internal. To Yankees, evil has been secularized at least since the early eighteenth century, and it has always been externalized.

The externalization of evil was powerfully characterized by Nathaniel Hawthorne in a penetrating and prophetic allegorical tale called "Earth's Holocaust." At the beginning of the story the world has become so overburdened with fraudulent and despicable things that its people decide to burn them on a huge plain in the west. First they throw into the flames all trappings of monarchy, nobility, hereditary distinctions, and military honors. In vain, one man protests that the fire is "consuming all that marked your advance from barbarism or that could have prevented your relapse thither.... In abolishing the majestic distinctions of rank, society loses not only its grace, but its steadfastness." He is hooted down, and then the crowds, isolating another evil, bring in and add to the fire all the liquor in the world. Next come tea and coffee and tobacco, then fashionable clothing, then all symbols of family ties and love between the sexes; then come all the weapons and other instruments of war, and then all the means of capital punishment, followed by the title deeds to all property. At that point a "modern philosopher" declares that it is necessary to "get rid of the weight of dead men's thought which has hitherto pressed so heavy on the living intellect," and into the inferno go all the world's books and pamphlets. Finally, all the trappings of organized religion are cast into the flames, so that now "the wood-paths shall be the aisles of our cathedral; the firmament itself shall be its ceiling."

At the end of the story the last hangman, the last thief, the last murderer, and the last toper on earth are commiserating over the end of wickedness in the now purified world. But a stranger of "fearfully dark" complexion and eyes that glow redder than the bonfire shows up and urges them to be of good cheer, for "you shall see good days yet. There is one thing that these wiseacres have forgotten to throw into the fire, and without which all the rest of the conflagration is just nothing at all." Asked by the last murderer what that was, the stranger replies, "What but the human heart itself?" And he adds, "unless they hit upon some method of purifying that foul cavern, forth from it will reissue all the shapes of wrong and misery—the same old shapes, or worse ones—which they have taken such a

vast deal of trouble to consume to ashes."

Hawthorne understood his Yankee neighbors better than they understood themselves.

There is one more crucial feature of the Yankee character that is ultimately theological in origin, and we shall turn to it in a moment. First, however, it will be helpful to take a brief but sweeping look at the Yankees' record as meddlers. For their first century and a half they pretty much minded their own business, which is to say one another's business. Then the Revolution and the establishment of the government under the Constitution brought them into contact with Southerners, and though Yankees and Southerners cooperated in bringing about independence, mutual antagonisms were not long in surfacing. For a considerable time Yankees were outnumbered in the national arena; and during the presidencies of Jefferson and Madison, when Southerners thoroughly dominated the federal government, New Englanders indulged themselves in a succession of secession movements.

But they bred like flies and they spread westward, infesting an area from Salem, Massachusetts, to Salem, Oregon, and a dozen Salems and New Salems in between. Yankees formed the backbone of the Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln, and it is unnecessary to rehearse here what that meant. There is, however, one important point to be made — one which, though obvious, few historians have been willing to make. The Yankees perceived slavery as an evil and stamped it out without giving any serious thought to the consequences. It hardly occurred to them that the former slaves needed preparation if they were to bear the awesome burdens and responsibilities of freedom. Consequently, the blacks were the principal victims of the Civil War, though the white South, too, lay devastated.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Yankees abandoned their work of Reconstructing the South and turned outward, with a view toward uplifting the remainder of mankind. The Reverend Josiah Strong, a Congregationalist minister, expressed their mood: "This race of unequalled energy, with all the majesty of numbers and the might of wealth behind it—the representative, let us hope, of the largest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization—having developed peculiarly aggressive traits calculated to impress its institutions upon mankind, will spread itself over the earth." Out went the missionaries, carrying the Truth to the African, the Malay, the heathen Chinese, and teaching those shameless wretches to wear shoes and cover their nakedness with the products of the busy industrial plants of New England.

During the same epoch a far more sinister form of imperialism was also developing, and that was in the area of higher education. In antebellum times, though the South had lagged behind the North in primary and secondary education it had actually surpassed the North in the number (and possibly the quality) of its colleges. Those colleges declined after the war, however, and the establishment of land-grant colleges and the normal school movement benefited the North much more than the South. More importantly, this was an age in which college education was being revolutionized by the introduction of the graduate school: thenceforth, the academic professions would become virtually monopolized by products of the graduate schools. The graduate schools, in turn, would be dominated by the Ivy League colleges and their graduates; their only serious rivals were Johns Hopkins and the University of Chicago, both of which were thoroughly Yankeeized. Hegemony over the graduate schools, together with a similar hold upon law schools and other professional schools, enabled Yankees to determine what was taught and how it was taught through most of the twentieth century.

By that means the ranks of the Yankees were swollen by recruits from other ethnic groups and from other sections, including the South. Nor were the converts simply scalawags, for the pressures against dissenters in the groves of academe were enormous. (I speak from personal experience: I put in six years in Madison and nine in the Ivy League, and I assure you I can understand what Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams went through.)

It is here that the last main theology-derived Yankee characteristic becomes relevant: the Yankees are millennialists. Once again, so are many Southerners, and once again the differences between the two varieties are vast. Traditional millennialism of the sort adhered to by several Southern denominations is based upon the apocalyptic books of Daniel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New. The first prophesies a steady worsening of life on earth over the course of a thousand years and through a succession of four kingdoms, each more evil than the last, then the sudden reversal of the course of history by divine will and the establishment of God's earthly kingdom under a ruler called the Son of Man. The prophecies in Revelation are more complex but again things grow steadily worse until history is reversed by God, the ruler of His kingdom now being Christ in His second coming.

An entirely different kind of millennialism, usually known as progressive millennialism, emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that is the kind embraced by the Yankees. In this ver-

sion there was no need for God to reverse the course of history, for history represented a progression of human triumphs over evil: when the thousand years were done, man himself would have established God's kingdom on earth. Jonathan Edwards, in the 1740s, reckoned that man had made it about three quarters of the way through, and thus that the millennium would arrive toward the end of the twentieth century. In Edwards' time, of course, progress toward the heavenly city was directed by God, man acting merely as the instrument of His will; but it was only a matter of time before people of the Yankee persuasion would become convinced that they could build the city without God's help. After they became so convinced, they began to notice and inform the world that God was dead.

I said at the outset that the Yankees' latest campaign to remake us in their own image is well under way. It is easy to believe otherwise, for Southerners qua Southerners are clearly not under such specific pressure as in the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, Yankees have not of late been pointing the accusing finger at us, but have indeed been chanting "mea culpa." But these signs are misleading. As for the absence of specific pressure, one need only check the Yankees' reform agenda—a host of particular items which add up to a wholesale onslaught against conventional morality, the family, and religion to perceive that they have in mind a more drastic overhaul of our society than any that Thaddeus Stevens ever dreamed of.

The other matter, the "mea culpa" syndrome, is subtle and convoluted. In the first place, the Yankee has always been uncomfortable when times are good, for then it appears that the millennium may be near, in which case there will be no further need for his reforming services. In such circumstances he looks frantically for evils and injustices, so as to reassure himself that there is a great deal left to be done; and if he blames himself for what is wrong he thereby stakes out a claim to be the one who must rectify it. (A guilt trip is an ego trip.) In the second place, the recent breast-beating has tended to center on the environment, and in all candor it must be admitted that Yankees have been far more skillful in mucking up the environment that we have.

And that leads us to a final point. I believe that somewhere, deep in the innermost recesses of their atrophied souls, Yankees know that they truly have botched things, and truly are plagued with guilt. That, I think, is the bottom line: the Yankee hates himself, and he hates his heritage. And why does he hate us? Because we do not hate ourselves and we treasure ours. ☆

**The Center That Holds**  
*Donald Davidson***1984**

During a chilly week in March while winter still threatened, I bethought myself that it was Lent and that I ought to choose some readings proper to the lean and crabbed season. What would best mortify my too, too Southern flesh? What would be The Great Society's equivalent of a medieval hair-shirt? The decision was easy. I picked out the most uncomfortable chair in the house and, sitting puritanically upright, began once more to read the *new* Southern historians—those of the so-called "Revisionist" School. I was looking for a suitable kind of pain—and pretty soon I got it. But, after all, this was no new experience for a Southerner—to be told for the hundredth time that Confederate heroes might sometimes be less than heroic or that the Reconstruction period was not—not *really*—the "Tragic Era," but was instead a kind of lovely prologue to Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. I began to yawn and would soon have fallen asleep if I had not stumbled upon Mr. C. Vann Woodward's essay, "The Historical Dimension," and found him saying in his very first sentence that it is "high time for some historian...to make his bow to Southern men of letters." A little further on I read this: "What is really needed is some acknowledgment of the genuine debt the historians owe to the poets, playwrights, and novelists ...[of the contemporary South]." What a sensation! To find one of the most revisionist of the Southern revisionist historians tossing bouquets instead of brickbats at the new Southern literature! It was a miracle! It was almost as if Ralph McGill should suddenly come out for segregation. Was Mr. Woodward, then, defecting from the Southern Liberals? Was he rejoining the Confederate States?

That would be saying too much. Nevertheless the little book in which Mr. Woodward publishes his sensational essay—a book called *The Burden of Southern History*—is dedicated to Robert Penn Warren, who is not only a member of the "Fugitive Group" of Southern poets, but bears the additional stigma (to a Liberal eye) of being, or at least having been, one of the twelve Southern "Agrarians" who in 1930 contributed to *I'll Take My Stand*. Mr. Warren's contribution was a very thoughtfully Southern essay on the Negro's problems in a highly industrialized civilization. In his own essay Mr. Woodward agrees with Allen Tate about the cause of the South's recent success in literature. The basic cause, he says, is in "the peculiarly historical consciousness of the Southern writer." That historical consciousness,

Mr. Woodward thinks, "is the secret spring of creative energies that has fed the whole literary movement in the South during the last three decades." That is what differentiates Southern writers—and the South itself—from the rest of the country. People in the novels of Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis "appear from nowhere, trailing no clouds of history, dissociated from the past." In the novels of Hemingway the lack of historical sense or even historical perspective is even more marked. The Hemingway characters "are invariably pictured as expatriates, as wanderers, as soldiers or adventurers... A Hemingway hero with a grandfather is inconceivable."

But to read the new Southern writers, beginning in the nineteen-thirties, was "to enter upon a new world of the imagination, a world in which the historical imagination played a supreme part."

When Mr. Woodward uses the term "historical imagination," I am sure he is not referring to the "historical novel," or not to that alone. He is referring—and I am certainly referring—to an all-pervasive quality, to the quality of the creative mind of poet or novelist or dramatist as it approaches any subject, the contemporary subject no less than the subject that comes from the near past or the distant past.

And this is a quality of the new Southern literature that I wish briefly to explore with you. I offer it not merely as a characteristic of the new Southern literature, but I also affirm it, once it is properly described, as a principle of art in every field of art and indeed as a principle of life. I am glad to have Mr. Woodward's declaration as a sort of visa on my Southern literary passport, if such is needed. But the country that we now enter is my native own, and yours, as much as his.

I hope you will indulge me if I now once more fit to my bowstring an arrow or two that I shot sixteen years ago.

In 1950, at a meeting of the Southern Literary Festival at Mississippi State College, I said, in effect, that the historical consciousness of the Southern writer is indeed one of the notable features of the traditional society that has continued to survive, even to flourish, in the South, while in the North and West it has been destroyed or stifled by the complete dominance of science, industrialism, and materialism—which are features of the anti-traditional or so-called progressive society. In a traditional society the present is continuous with the past. The connection of present with past is far richer than is represented by the logical sequence that a historian may seek to discover and to document. Affection, kinship, piety, and above all, religious belief shape the long continuities of time and place into

transcendent memory. In contrast, modern progressive society insists more and more upon discontinuity. Each day, calendared and clocked, in terms of mere logical convenience, destroys its yesterday and in its turn is destroyed by its tomorrow. Persons become functions of the progressive whirl—specialists, pieces of men. Despite its humanitarian professions and idealistic promises, the anti-traditional society has some highly dangerous if not deadly features: for example, its rapid, ever-accelerating *rate* of change, its self-destructiveness, irresponsibility, vulgarity, disorder, its tendency to large-scale wreckage and brutality. But let me describe the traditional society as I described it in Mississippi, sixteen years ago, with particular reference to the Southern writer:

The person who is born of a traditional society, if he is not corrupted, will act as a whole person in all his acts, including his literary acts. The truth of experience that fills his emotional being is not at war with the truth of his intellectual judgments, but the two, as he writes, are one. His apprehension of this subject matter, which is intuitive and comes from "knowledge carried to the heart," moves hand in hand with his composition, which derives from his intellectual judgment, his sense of fitness and order. Thus an act as cold-blooded as deliberate literary composition must be, is redeemed and assisted by the warm-blooded knowledge of the heart. It is natural for a Southerner to compose in this way....

It is also natural for him to see men in their total capacity as persons and to see things in all their rich particularity as things and to understand that the relationships between persons and persons, and between persons and things, are more complex and more unpredictable than any scientific textbook invites one to think.... His traditional society has taught him to look at the world in such a way. It has also impressed upon him that the world is both good and evil. Toward nature, toward his fellow creatures, toward the historic past, he has learned to exercise that piety which Mr. Richard Weaver has praised as the virtue most needed in the modern world. Thus it is that in the moment of self-consciousness the Southern writer is able to bring to bear not only his personal view, but also the total metaphysic of his society.

But "metaphysic" is a philosophical term. And Richard Weaver has noted, quite correctly, that the South does not go in for philosophy in a formal and systematic way. The Southern philosophy is more of a religion than philosophy. In fact, it is the Old-time Religion that in the familiar song "was good for Paul and Silas/And it's good enough for me!" Richard Weaver, in the article to which I have been referring, puts it in another way but means the same thing. Weaver

says that the Southerner's nature is to distrust analysis. "It is his habit to see things as forms or large configurations, and he senses that the process of breaking these down (which is nearly always carried on for some practical purpose) somehow proves fatal to the truth of the whole." And the Southerner in this natural preference is in line with a great tradition. "We have only to recall," says Weaver, "that in the achievements of the world's cultures, the work of analysis is fairly late and is somehow specialized. The form in which the messages of the great religions come...is seldom if ever analytical.... The evidence is overwhelming that synthesis is the way of religion and art and that analysis is the way of science and business, and this distinction underlies a wide range of Southern attitudes and choices. The typical Southerner is an authentically religious being if one means by religion not a neat set of moralities but a deep and even frightening intuition of man's radical dependence in this world...it causes him to demur at the analysis of life, or love, or war, or any other large subject. What he wants is a picture of it, in which the whole is somehow greater than the analyzable parts."

Or—if I might now make application of this view—if the South from the time of the Reconstruction of 1865-1876 had universally adopted and applied the views then prevailing at the North—if the South had destroyed its traditional society, utterly and forthwith, and lost all historical consciousness, there would have been no such writers as have today excited Mr. Vann Woodward's attention. If in this new Reconstruction that we are now enduring, a hundred years after the first, we should accept and apply the advice being given by the new apostles of discontinuity and destruction, we shall have no more writers like Faulkner, Tate, Cabell, Glasgow, Warren, Ransom, Katherine Anne Porter (to name but a few); but our novelists will be the fiction-writing parallels of Ralph McGill and Harry Ashmore; and our poets of some new Beatnik school will be practicing their Southern versions of *Howl*.

Instead of such degeneration we have come—as I said back in 1950—"to the moment of self-consciousness...the moment when a writer awakes to realize what he and his people truly are, in comparison with what they are being urged to become." And what does this mean? It means that the Southerner (or any other member of a traditional society, even a fragment of one) does not have to labor to learn some things. We already know, from the start, *who we are, where we are, where we belong, what we live by, what we live for*. That priceless inheritance is something given to us. But in the thoroughly modernized, anti-traditional society, it is not given; it can be

achieved, if at all, only after long struggle. It is exactly what the apostles of the new Reconstruction, in the pseudoscientific language of the modern power-state, are saying we must not have, must give up if we do have it.

But we have not given it up. And so our moments of self-consciousness may become moments of deepest remembrance that lead to the life of the imagination—the poem, the story, the play, the novel. Yet the writer's imagination only brings into significant form the life of our people who have cherished, through long tradition and rich custom, what makes such imagination possible. In 1903 the great Irish writer, William Butler Yeats, wrote this of the people of the Galway plains:

There is still in truth upon these great level plains a people, a community bound together by imaginative possessions, by poems and stories which have grown out of its own life, and by a past of great passions which can still waken the heart to imaginative action. One could still, if one had the genius, and had been born Irish, write for these people plays and poems like those of Greece.... England or any other country which takes its tunes from the great cities and gets its taste from schools and not from old custom, may have a mob, but it cannot have a people.... A people alone are a great river; and where a people has died, a nation is about to die.

So said Yeats, and what he said came true for Ireland and for William Butler Yeats. Between the Ireland of Yeats and the South of the past three or four decades there is, I would say, a stirring likeness. We too have been and still are a community bound together by imaginative possessions—a people that has not yet died, a community that, though shaken, battered, and maimed, still lives as a community. What binds us together is in some considerable measure what bound the Irish people through the centuries. I remember the very words of the Irish poet George William Russell ("AE"), friend of Yeats, when he stood before a Nashville audience many years ago—the ladies of the Centennial Club and their guests who had come together to surprise Russell with a birthday celebration in his honor. "I will tell you," said he (in a fine impromptu speech after the presentation of the birthday cake), "why Ireland has a great literature. Because we were poor; because we were backward; because we were downtrodden and oppressed; because we loved our country; because we were religious." And, hearing that beloved poet as he towered before us with his great brown beard and mighty shoulders, I felt then as I feel now that he might be speaking for Tennessee, for Vir-

ginia, for all the besieged, invaded South, no less than for County Sligo, the River Shannon, Dublin, Tara's halls.

I tell you what I know by word of mouth as much as by paper and print. I am led to remember how stories and poems start, when they spring from that moment of self-consciousness to which I have referred. What passes from memory to memory, without benefit of the historian's record, is as old in time as the memories that it expresses, and if it is accepted it endures as long as the land and people that accept it.

A section of *The Tall Men*—which I first published in 1927—is by this measure about a hundred years old, for it embodies what my grandmother told me—my grandmother who was a girl in her late teens, in Chapel Hill, Tennessee, during the Federal occupation of the eighteen-sixties. She saw her young friends, Confederate soldiers in uniform, captured and shot down in cold blood by Federal troopers. She saw them lined up by the roadside, and the rifles levelled. She heard the shots and saw them fall—all but one who broke away and ran—and then was shot, too. She helped "lay out" the bodies for burial. And she told me about it, one day, when I was a child at her home. Later, when I was endeavoring to define, in a series of long poems, the relationship of a modern Southerner to his past, I remembered what my grandmother had told me and made it part of a poem ("The Sod of Battlefields," in *The Tall Men*).

All of us in the South do a great deal of this kind of remembering, within the circle of family and close friends. With a little help from written records—family papers, books, all that we somehow accumulate—we project our memories far back. In another poem of mine, in which I try to visualize a colonial ancestor, I deal with this process of memory:

I cannot see him plain, that far-off sire  
Who notched the first oak on this western hill,  
And the bronze tablet cannot tell what fire  
-Urging the deep bone back to the viking wave-  
Kindled his immigrant eye and drove his will.  
But in the hearthside tale his rumor grows  
As voice to voice into the folk-chain melts  
And clamor of danger brings the lost kin close.

To see how the folk-chain of memory binds us together and comes into dramatic being in story or novel at some unexpected moment, I would offer Andrew Lytle's novel *The Long Night* as a distin-

guished example. From Mr. Lytle's own account we know that the idea of the novel came to him from a Southern historian, his good friend the late Frank Lawrence Owsley. In a prologue to the novel, written in the form of a letter in August, 1936, and printed with the book, Mr. Lytle says:

Frank Owsley, Esquire

Dear Frank:

It has been over a year now since you told me the story of your Uncle Dink. You had stopped over at Cornsilk, you will remember, on your way to South Alabama, and we were sitting on the porch in the cool of the evening waiting for supper. It would be hard to say exactly what started you on the history of his exploits. It may have been that your journey to the old neighborhood brought it to mind. But I like to think that stories come naturally at such a time and at such a place, for certainly if it be true that the crowded town is necessary to the arts as a place where the artist may mingle with other artists and learn the conscious practice of his craft, I am sure it is no less true that but for the country there would be few good stories left to tell.

The question of form of course arises, and with it theories of art and the disciplines and techniques demanded by the arts. But here I am speaking about the richness of the sources of art that we command because of the long presence in the South of a traditional community where, as Mr. Lytle says, "stories come naturally...the tall tales of a winter's evening or the discussion through the hot afternoon of the idiosyncrasies of some kinsman, now long dead."

What comes naturally in the South and in the Ireland of Yeats may be difficult elsewhere. But we know from the example of T. S. Eliot that the historical consciousness may be highly valued and ardently cultivated, eventually with distinguished results, even though the society in which the writer emerges is not much more than the "Waste Land" of Eliot's famous poem—that is to say, a civilization that is over-civilized and on the down grade, decadent, no longer in any true sense a society. Very likely the realization—or revelation—that his society has become or is becoming a "waste land" is what impels a writer like Eliot to develop or seek to develop historical consciousness, in order that he may better function as an artist and, in redeeming himself, also do something toward redeeming his barren society. But in the end there is no redemption without religion. That is as true for Eliot as for all others, as his career proves. Note that first he approaches his problem by way of literary tradition as such, in his fa-

mous essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," published in 1919, a year after the close of World War I. In that same year of 1919, Yeats composed his remarkable poem, "The Second Coming"—surely one of the greatest of modern poems—with its prophetic lines:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Eliot, thinking at first of the literary problem in a rather secular way, declares that tradition "cannot be inherited. If you want it you must obtain it by great labor." Here is the central, often quoted passage of his essay:

It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to write poetry after his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a *feeling* that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.

Observe that Eliot says the writer must feel that the literary tradition of Western civilization, from Homer on, exists in his own present. He does not say that a writer must at every turn display his knowledge of that literature, as misguided imitators of Eliot have sometimes seemed to think. It is the feeling in the bones that counts. That is what Eliot says. And that is the way the South thinks about the past. It is the way the Southern writers praised by Mr. Woodward evidently think. But it seems clear that Eliot himself did not at first have that feeling. He had to struggle to acquire it—to cultivate in himself what ought to have come as an inheritance, what the Southern writers already had by a kind of natural right. To ally himself with tradition Eliot, born in St. Louis of New England Unitarian stock, had to go from New England to Old England, renounce his American citizenship, and become a British citizen. In his critical essays and, much more dramatically, in his poems, from *The Waste Land* through *The Hollow Men* and *Ash Wednesday*, to his *Four*

*Quartets*, we may trace his long and painful Pilgrim's Progress, his spiritual and artistic struggle to "redeem the time"—that is, to achieve his purpose, openly declared in 1928, to be "classicist in literature, royalist in politics [by which he meant "temperate conservatism"], and Anglo-Catholic in religion." And now—the poet who seemed unintelligible in the nineteen-twenties has become teacher, leader, and sage for two generations of artists and intellectuals. Eliot the poet, not very long ago, spoke to an audience of 16,000 in a stadium in Minnesota. Eliot the dramatist has restored verse to the theatre; he has conquered Broadway. The voice of Eliot the Anglo-Catholic in religion, the conservative in politics, the classicist in literature is heard throughout the world.

I am proposing—in fact I am insisting—through reference to these notable examples, Yeats in Ireland, Eliot in England and America—that we of the South have great allies, great comrades in our sense of tradition that elsewhere, if it existed, has been lost through neglect or deliberately destroyed, or (worst fate of all) vulgarized by cheap commercialism. The renewal of belief, the sense of belonging, the blessing of true community—qualities nourished in a traditional society, are our most precious assets. Without them, literature declines and dies. It is the new traditionalists—Yeats, Eliot, some of the Southern writers, and others like them—who are the only substantial counterforce in our time to decadent realism, decadent naturalism, cheap and often vicious sensationalism.

It may seem that I have said too little of the "old-time religion," but that is surely something that needs little explanation to a Southern audience. There are numerous ways in which it acts upon literature. One of the most obvious and notable is the recovery, in the novels of Faulkner and Warren in particular, of the idea of man as an imperfect creature possessing free will, capable of choosing between good and evil regardless of heredity and environment, an individual responsible in the end for his spiritual condition. This means, among other things, that the novel in the hands of such writers can take on tragic dimensions. There is no shifting of blame to society as the guilty party, as Theodore Dreiser seems to shift it in his large novel that he misnames *An American Tragedy*. Determinism of the sort practiced by Zola and his modern successors has virtually no place in Southern fiction or poetry. Faulkner's rejection of the Rousseauistic—and now socialistic—idea of man as innately good has received much critical discussion, as has the general Southern assumption of "original sin," whether taken in a Calvinistic or other meaning, and I will not dwell on this topic.

I prefer the more affirmative approach used by Louise Cowan in her recent discussion of "The 'Pietas' in Southern Poetry," especially a passage in which, summarizing Christopher Dawson, she notes that "as a community adapts itself to a way of life a conciliation of the divine and the human orders may be effected within it."

In such a society [she writes] economic, moral, and aesthetic patterns, transformed by a kind of grace, lose their exclusively secular character and begin to assume a sacredness within the community; and loyalty between members of the community rests on this essentially metaphysical basis. Men do not bow to each other but to the divine as it manifests itself in their communal life. Such an attitude is what the Romans called *pietas*, reverence before the gods and one's ancestors. It is not a conception very likely to be understood today. Nevertheless, one might conceivably argue that any genuine culture possesses this *pietas*, and possesses it with good reason; it represents a people's awareness of the twofold nature of human society.

If the other view mentioned—that places man as a free agent capable of either good or evil, and responsible for his choice between them—if that view makes possible the writing of tragic works, this second view allows for the high comedy that is the counterpart of tragedy. But I am here interested in emphasizing the fact that in the traditional society described by Mrs. Cowan even economic objects take on something of a sacred character. The divine element is thus interfused throughout the human and secular element, not separated from it. And this gives a basis for everyday manners, for the domestic and utilitarian arts, for common human intercourse no less than for public architecture, whether civil or religious, and the ritual of divine worship itself.

Finally, there is that aspect of Southern religiousness that is truly first in order of importance; submission to the mystery of life and the will of God. *Remember thy Creator*. For generation after generation these words from the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes have been bedded deep in the mind and soul of the South. From this piety arises the Southerner's acceptance of nature as in the last analysis inscrutable and unconquerable—as Richard Weaver so happily says: "not something to make over or change; it is something for him to come to terms with."

The world is God-given [writes Weaver]; its mysteries are not supposed to be fully revealed; and the only possible course in the long run is to accommodate oneself to its vast pulsations. Thus nature is seen as providential, and

even its harsher aspects must be regarded as having ends that we do not fully comprehend. In a word, the Southerner reveres original creation.... [For this reason] the Yankee's effort to become complete master of his environment appears to the Southerner an effrontery against an order which is divinely provided and which, in the total outcome, is not going to be improved by busy human schemes.

The Northerner, in contrast, as Weaver points out, is "a child of the Enlightenment...his religion is to do good, and his own mind is his church." This tendency leads, of course, to an opposition between "works" and "faith." The Northerner chooses "works" and judges things, people, institutions by that standard. The Southerner, while not altogether neglecting "works," leans strongly toward "faith" in his preference—if "faith" and "works" are to be set in opposition. As a Christian, he is pretty much of an Old Testament man and mixes a good deal of Hebraism with his Hellenism and his devout Christianity. There are certain material and political disadvantages in this emphasis, especially in times when "liberalism" has come to mean looseness in all departments of life. But—again I refer to Richard Weaver — what the South loses by remembering its Creator as well as its history it gains in its freedom from the sin of envy: "It is not in [the Southerner's] character to hate another man because that man has a great deal more of the world's goods than he has or is ever likely to have. He is not now and never has been a leveller.... From his point of view there is nothing written in the original bill of things which says that the substance of the world must be distributed equally.... The modern impulse which elevates envy into a principle of social action...is thus completely foreign to his tradition."

This being a deeply founded Southern trait, it should be easy to understand why trade unionism has not been favored in the South as in the North; and much light is shed upon the South's strong resistance to integration of the races. It is not the kind of light, however, that we may expect the government at Washington to see as long as this country tolerates the present Supreme Court and others in high office, blinded by their own conceit.

That blindness goes far back in history. For illustrative purposes I shall here place it only as far back as March 4, 1933. In that spring season of thirty-three years ago, my wife and I, with our thirteen-year-old daughter, were in effect "refugees" in Marshallville, Georgia, after a siege of disaster during the hard times of the Great Depression. We were in Marshallville as the guests, more or less, of my friend the late John Donald Wade and his mother, Ida Frederick

Wade. And on that March day of 1933 Miss Ida had invited us to sit by the fire in her great old house and listen to the inauguration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as President of the United States. We heard the bugles play the President's March, and we heard that voice, soon to become so famous, say, among other things: "You have nothing to fear but fear itself!" Those were words, I believe, that could not possibly have occurred to any true Southerner to say on that occasion or any occasion. For he would have known from childhood that there are certain fears we cannot do without, and most of all in times of tribulation and crisis the one remembered from the ending of the lesson in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

The saying of Roosevelt is the glib slogan of the Social Welfare State when the center no longer holds and modern bureaucracy takes over all power. The faith of the South, which rests on the fear of God, is what makes a people great. It is the only center that holds. ☆

**The Second Burning of Atlanta**  
*Warren Leamon***1984**

Just before the turn of the century my grandmother came from the farmland of middle Georgia to Atlanta. "The Yankees didn't whip us; they just overpowered us," she insisted until the day she died in 1956. Her bedroom walls were covered with pictures of her two heroes: Eugene Talmadge and Franklin Roosevelt.

Day in, day out she bored us with her nostalgia for the old farm and her lament for the lost virtues: family loyalty, hard work, belief in God. Yet I learned from my mother—who had married my grandmother's son and was in a position to know—that she took little interest in the family, allowed her son to leave school at the age of twelve and go off to Miami with his father and brother to find work in the "boom"; that she was interested primarily in movies and makeup; that she did as little housework and cooking as she could get by with; and as far as I know, she never went to church. Indeed, about the only thing N.O.W. could fault her for was that she never sought her identity by going to work.

But then, identity was never a problem for her. She was what she was. First the romantic Southerner full of the most absurd legends of Confederate valor and honor; then a fierce advocate for the New South, a staunch disciple of Henry Grady (her most treasured possession, after her father's Confederate medal, was a tin box full of souvenirs of the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition, one of Atlanta's first forays into that boosterism that has characterized the city down through the years). A whirling dervish of contradiction, she confounded us even in death: her birth certificate had burned up with the Meriwether County courthouse and her marriage license said she was born in 1878 while her Social Security application said in 1880. Why her Social Security application gave the younger age we never figured out but we decided to make her 76 years old for all eternity. In my mind and in my memory that woman is bound up with Atlanta, the city I was born and grew up in. For a long time the associations were purely sensual: a smell, a sight, a sound called up an image of her, waiting for a light to change at Five Points or standing beside a picnic table at a family reunion in Piedmont Park. Especially when I went away and lived in a foreign country did she haunt me. As I walked back to my room on damp winter nights, I saw that young country woman, alone in the city, making her way along the sidewalks, dodging streetcars

and black automobiles and men in pepper-and-salt suits.

I didn't create those images; they came out of old newspapers and scrapbooks and photo albums. But my imagination, which for some reason scorned my parents and leaped over my own childhood, had to bring those stiff lifeless forms to life, animate them, and I could do that only by imagining Atlanta, by creating a city that existed before I was born into it. Of course, I didn't create the city either. Atlanta, I had been told, wasn't a Southern city; it was an outpost of Yankeedom, devoid of tradition and culture. For a while that myth dovetailed nicely with the other myth I had come to accept, the myth of "alienation" that dominated my studies in modern literature and philosophy. My ancestors, Southern farmers drifting into a strange city, suited the longing for freedom that affects all young people, a longing that made the "anti-hero" so attractive to my generation.

Only gradually did I come to perceive that my grandmother was neither misplaced country woman nor Yankeeified New Southerner; she balanced somewhere between those two poles, lived in a world that defied Stonewall Jackson and Henry Grady. And that world was Atlanta.

The city my grandmother came to in 1896 had been conceived a scant fifty years before in the heads of politicians and railroad magnates. It wasn't born, like other cities, in sweet harmony with the earth, falling naturally into a cove, a bay, a bend in the river. Rather it began as an intersection of lines on a map—abstraction laid on abstraction. One of those bastards produced by the industrial age, it could trace its lineage back only as far as the train: metal on metal powered by metal driven by fire, the precise up and down movement of the piston.

What to name a bastard is always a problem. They first called this one Terminus, but only for a couple of years in lieu of any official name. Then Marthasville, after the daughter of the governor of the state, the little bastard already learning to play on the pretensions of pompous politicians. But Marthasville was obviously no name for what John C. Calhoun had predicted would become a great city. John Edgar Thompson, Pennsylvanian and railroad engineer residing in Madison, Georgia, at the time was asked for a better one and responded, "Atlanta, the terminus of the Western and Atlantic Railroad—Atlanta masculine, Atlanta feminine—a coined word...." Thus Atlanta, man coined into woman, Newtonian transvestite, machine in long white dress and bonnet.

From the beginning, then, a Northern outpost in the South, built

and named by Northerners, finally given its symbol by the most notorious Northerner of all, who also gave it its one historical distinction—the only major American city to have been burned to the ground by an invading army. But it wasn't a major city at the time, only a boomtown, makeshift buildings thrown up around an intersection of rails. But great myths have grown from lesser disasters and in 1887, when the official seal of the city was created, it bore the image of the phoenix. The city fathers, it seems, could think of no more appropriate symbol of death and resurrection at a time when ex-Confederate officers—true sons of the old South—were wheeling and dealing with Northern railroad tycoons.

Momentarily in 1901, when William Dawson Alexander ordered three steam powered automobiles and put them on the streets, it appeared the city might fade with its surroundings—the old Confederacy—into the past. Steam power, after all, was doomed as were the railroads, whose owners were already buying up Spindletop and other oil strikes. But the city that, as early as 1886, had managed to turn the War Between the States into a tourist attraction with the Cyclorama, a typical Victorian monstrosity depicting the Battle of Atlanta which the city picked up for a song when its owners abandoned it; the city which mounted the Cotton States and International Exposition—such a city was hardly likely to be taken in by the quaint charm of the steam engine, and in 1909 Atlanta put on the largest automobile show ever held outside New York City.

Those years—1895-1910—were a turning point for the city. It balanced precariously between the old greed of its Southern step-sisters—Charleston, Savannah, Richmond—and the new greed of its natural kin, Chicago and Los Angeles. Joel Chandler Harris, an Atlanta newspaper editor from Eatonton, Georgia, created Uncle Remus even as blacks were gunned down in the streets of the city in the 1904 race riot; Asa Chandler bought the formula for Coca-Cola from a Columbus pharmacist at about the time the city erected a Confederate veterans home.

Or, put another way, my grandmother married my grandfather in 1897. He came to Atlanta from Americus, Georgia, in 1895 to work as a glazier in the Cotton States Exposition. His ancestors, stretching from his father all the way back to the fort major who came to Nova Scotia with Burgoyne after the French had been driven out, had been musicians. One played the flute at the Battle of Waterloo; another played it at Cold Harbor. But my grandfather, practically deaf from birth, was cut off by nature from the music of his past. At the age of 40 he managed to win the hand of a beautiful six-foot tall, 18-

year-old country girl and the deaf house and sign painter spent the rest of his life trying to provide for her. "Mr. Will" she called him until the day he died, acknowledging not only his age but the stern dignity of his long brooding silences, broken occasionally by violent explosions of temper. Or so I've been told. I never really knew him—he died in 1941 when I was three—but the picture I have of him and his young bride epitomizes for me the essence of the city: the wiry body of the deaf man stiff and tense as he strains to hear the music of his ancestors; the dark brown eyes of the girl, staring off somewhere beyond the camera that captured the present instant. Already citizens of Atlanta, about to begin a life of steady movement from one rented house to another, dissolving into the larger movement of the city as it pushed out in all directions.

In 1915 the UDC leased Stone Mountain and hired Gutzon Borglum to turn the sheer face into a "Civil War Memorial." Borglum created and actually began work on a grand design that would have taken, according to one of his successors, over 600 years to complete. He managed to block out three figures before he blew up his designs and workshop and left to find fame and fortune in the Black Hills, where he executed the Mt. Rushmore memorial.

Meanwhile Atlanta prospered as an alien enclave in the midst of a hostile region. Because of the county unit system it had almost no legislative power in the state. Yet nothing—not disenfranchisement, nor the worldwide adverse publicity that surrounded the Leo Frank lynching (one of the rare outbursts of anti-Semitism in the South), nor the great fire of 1917, nor the poverty of the region (a legacy of Reconstruction policies imposed by the conqueror on the conquered and kept alive by those moral stalwarts of Northern democracy and freedom, the robber barons)—nothing could hinder the growth of the city. The first planned community had been Inman Park, close to the heart of the city, begun before the proliferation of the automobile. Soon new roads were cut into the wooded countryside and subdivisions began to spring up everywhere. By the 1930s U.S. highways—the "good roads" the oil and automobile lobbies pressured the government into building—began to intersect in Atlanta, abstraction laid on abstraction.

It was during this period—from about 1920 to 1950 or so—that Atlanta developed, however briefly, a character of its own. The boll weevil and the Depression drove hordes of dispossessed Southerners into the city, massive squat brick buildings gave the downtown area, expanding from Rich's and Five Points north to Davison's and the junction of the Peachtrees, a solid somber quality. The suburbs—

Druid Hills, Little Five Points, Ansley Park and especially Buckhead—developed into unique communities.

I don't mean that Atlanta was on its way to becoming a Southern city like Savannah or Charleston is a Southern city; commercial and bureaucratic capitals are always viewed with suspicion by the provinces. But capitals can develop a character or personality of their own; the Londoner or Dubliner, for example, is as well known as the stereotypical Englishman or Irishman.

The Atlanta I was born into in 1938 had developed a slow, easy-going atmosphere. Its typical citizen was a Southernized Yankee or a partially citified rural Southerner who concealed his business acumen behind the mask of a country bumpkin. Buckhead shut down on Wednesday afternoons, men drank whiskey straight from the bottle while standing in the kitchen, and the wealthy (who were shifting from Druid Hills to the mansions on the northwest side of the city) covered their walls with pictures of Confederate generals and maps of the Old South, but they did not take the past nearly as seriously as they took Coca-Cola or Georgia Power. It was a basically *democratic* city in which persons like myself received invitations to the debutante ball at the Piedmont Driving Club and bank presidents were cunning enough to hire the ambitious sons of working class families. As late as the 1950s in the high school I attended, overalled and broganed rednecks from Sandy Springs mingled with the sons and daughters of new middle-class and "old" money families. Even Jim Crow laws, another legacy of the North's efforts to civilize the South, were more tolerated than eagerly enforced, mainly because Atlanta, unlike other Southern towns and cities, had pretty clearly established black and white sections.

But what the city failed to develop, and this proved to be its undoing, was any cultural center. A fierce anti-intellectualism dominated daily life (and anti-intellectualism always results in rampant sentimentality). Two hundred and fifty miles to the north at a Methodist-founded college in Nashville a group of writers, seeking to escape the moonlight and magnolia tradition of the Lost Cause, called themselves the Fugitives and launched a movement that was to affect the intellectual development of the country; in Atlanta Georgia Tech won football games while another richly endowed Methodist liberal arts college produced nothing daring or innovative. Atlanta's great work of art remained the Cyclorama, the most striking feature of which is its weight. Frances Newman's *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, which came out in the 20s and is set partially in Atlanta, is still the best novel by an Atlantan, but she submerged her Atlanta roots in a fashionable

experimentation which not even the current feminist idiocy in literary criticism can bring back to life. To date the best works by Atlantans about Atlanta remain Dickey's slightly sentimental "Looking for the Buckhead Boys" and Windham's volume of short stories, *The Warm County*, and his autobiographical *Emblems of Conduct*.

In 1936 Atlantan Margaret Mitchell published *Gone With the Wind*, thus providing the basis for what was to become, in 1939, the greatest event in Atlanta's cultural history: the world premiere of the movie version of the novel. For people around the world (the musical version was a smash hit on the Tokyo stage not long ago) Atlanta is the South and Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh are the quintessential Southerners. The book, of course, has very little to do with the realities of the antebellum South though its depiction of Reconstruction is actually not too bad.

In fact, *Gone With the Wind* was a typical product of Atlanta and Henry Grady's "New South." Masquerading as a novel about the South, it was actually a *Depression* novel; Mitchell's message was that man can, through sheer will power, cunning and hard work, raise himself up from poverty and destitution, a welcome message anywhere in the world in 1936 (and an even more welcome message in Europe and Japan in the aftermath of World War II). Such a naive idea needed a sentimental form and no form is more sentimental (with the possible exception of pornography) than the romance. But we should not make the mistake of thinking that Mitchell wrote a potboiler; she was deadly serious about the novel, as the long years of research prove. The key to understanding the success of *Gone With the Wind* is also the key to understanding the success of Atlanta: the creators of each were the victims, not the masters, of their sentimentality. Nor should we think that only Yankees and foreigners were taken in by the novel; it was—and still is—enormously popular all over the South. Southerners preferred it to that other novel that came out in 1936 and was—and still is—largely unread in the South—*Absalom, Absalom!* Faulkner explored the realities, many of them quite grim, of the rise and fall of the South; Mitchell expressed a deep-seated desire to ignore those realities in favor of secular ideals the old South tried so hard to resist.

Atlanta's cultural and intellectual sterility was inherent in its creation. As we have seen, the city was a mutation, born of an arbitrary union of rail lines, and mules cannot give birth to anything. For a brief period the city managed to shape a community of sorts from a hodge-podge of Northern and Southern values. But its guiding force has always been movement. Sherman's burning of the town was in a

sense an act of self-destruction, the North destroying its own creation. But to the modern mind buildings are as unconnected with the natural world as values and morals and since Sherman's time Atlanta has self-destructed over and over again—a phoenix diving into itself and finding a void from which to construct yet another ephemeral reality called "Atlanta."

And so my Atlanta began to fall apart after World War II when the first freeway began to inch out from the center of town to Peachtree and Piedmont Roads. That freeway, like Alexander's steam cars, was already the product of the past. The city fathers knew where the future lay—in the temporary wartime buildings near Hapeville which made up the Atlanta airport—and began the mad scramble for air routes, the final abstraction, invisible lines intersecting over the city.

In the fifties, when I was a teenager, you passed by Stone Mountain on U.S. 78, a two-lane highway that went on to Athens and then to South Carolina. If you wanted to view the unfinished carving, you simply pulled off the road into a gravelled parking area and got out of the car. You had to look long and hard before the figures emerged from the granite: first the almost completed Lee, then the vague outlines of Jackson and Davis. I remember thinking on one occasion how appropriate it was to have an unfinished monument to an unfinished cause. But years later, as I stood in an art gallery in Florence and stared at Michelangelo's captives—those unfinished men who seem to be straining to pull themselves out of marble—it occurred to me that what the monument really commemorated was the city I grew up in, a product—like all other new American cities—destined never to achieve an identity, destined to celebrate change after change in a futile attempt to make a virtue out of sterility.

In the 1960s Martin Luther King had a dream and Atlanta began the desegregation of its school system. It went about the task in typical fashion, turning a difficult, potentially explosive situation into a public relations triumph. "Atlanta is a city too busy to hate," became a slogan known nationwide and the country marvelled at the way the South's largest city desegregated its schools without any violence.

Or so the Chamber of Commerce myth went; the reality, as always in Atlanta, was somewhat different. Even as the first black children were entering the public schools, the white flight from the city was beginning and those whites who didn't leave began enrolling their children in private schools. Today the Atlanta public school system is over 90 percent black; indeed, practically any school system in any reactionary backwoods Southern town is more integrated than the

Atlanta system. You have to go outside the South—to Boston or Chicago—to find a more “racist” school system than the one in Atlanta. The reason for this gap between illusion and reality in Atlanta is not hard to find. Since it was assembled in the 1840s the city has survived in a hostile region by holding steadily to economic growth as its one and only principle. Probably no American city has ever been so rigidly controlled by its business community, which has managed to project the image of Atlanta as an altruistic city in constant struggle against an ignorant bigoted region. But private enterprise is altruistic only so long as altruism is good for business, as was the case during integration when a “stable social climate” was deemed necessary for economic growth. That reality, however, proved to be an illusion; political power shifted and the coalition between the wealthy business community and blacks (which meant, of course, rule by the wealthy business community) broke down and business began to follow white parents out of the city to the suburbs. To fill the void the new power elite began the city’s final descent into utter anonymity—it decided to turn downtown Atlanta into a convention center.

So after a century the illusion finally becomes the reality. Every business and professional man in the country will tell you that he has been to Atlanta, by which he means that he has flown into the airport, taken a taxi to Peachtree Center, spent a couple of days in those four or five square blocks riding open elevators up and down gaudy hotels, gone back to the airport in a taxi and flown home. What, after all, is Atlanta? This small flashy collection of hotels, shops and restaurants? The crumbling stores and buildings that surround it? The shopping centers and professional and industrial “parks” that sprawl along I-285 to the north of the city? The fire Sherman started 120 years ago still rages as the city pushes farther and farther out, leaving behind mostly blacks to live in the charred remains.

Symbols tell the story: on the grounds of the state capitol stands the statue of Old Gene Talmadge while Henry Grady dominates Five Points, once the commercial center of the city. After an extended battle the black leadership decides—as their white predecessors decided—that the tourist value of the War Between the States outweighs the cause it was fought for and agrees to restore the Cyclorama. The new Georgia-Pacific building rises where an insurance building once stood, that insurance building having replaced the old Loews Grand Theater, where the premiere of *Gone With The Wind* took place.... But one symbol best evokes the lack of any moral or cultural center that has characterized Atlanta from the beginning. Not long ago Forrest

Avenue, named after the slave trader who became, along with Stonewall Jackson, the fiercest and best Confederate field officer, was changed to Ralph McGill Street in honor of the sportswriter turned sentimental civil rights opportunist.

Such a renaming has significance far beyond its inherent silliness. No one protested the change, probably because most people in Atlanta don't remember who Ralph McGill was, let alone Nathan Bedford Forrest. But that is precisely the point: names are time capsules; they may go unnoticed for generations but eventually someone will ask, "Why is it called Forrest Avenue?" and in seeking the answer he may uncover what Atlanta was during Reconstruction and that discovery will, in turn, reveal something about the city he lives in. Think of all the other names—Lee Street, Lindbergh Road, Pershing Point—and what they might reveal someday. As I write the city council debates whether or not to force the taxpayers to finance "Underground Atlanta," a reconstruction for tourists of a portion of the city that was destroyed by viaducts built around the turn of the century to accommodate the railroads. Such reconstructions are becoming common across the South as Chambers of Commerce learn that puritanical Americans have discovered history as yet another excuse for getting drunk and buying trinkets made in Taiwan. Thus we change names and tear down the old even as we create spurious sanitized versions of the past. As the South loses its sense of history, it loses its sense of the present; and Atlanta, as it dissolves into a chaos of mindless expansion, becomes typical of the region's descent into the vast Disney-land called America.

In the heart of Atlanta one can find a most unlikely microcosm of the South today. Standing near the state capitol where Tom Watson still rages against the Pope is the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Sherman, at the urging of the local Roman Catholic priest, spared it when he burned the city. It has stood, more or less as it is despite a recent fire, through change after change, a reminder that the South is a part of a tradition—the old unity of God, man and nature—twisting and turning back to the Fall. At the center of that tradition stands Christ, God become man, reality become symbol of the reconciliation of opposites: life and death, good and evil, animal and divine. Replacing Christ is the phoenix, symbol of man's desire to become God, Plato's old dream of utopia become once again a nightmare.

#### EPILOGUE

Recently I took my children to Stone Mountain Park. You have to pay to get in now; once inside you can ice skate and look at farm ani-

mals and tour a plantation home complete with Southern beaux and belles and paddle around a lake and take a Swiss-made cable car to the top of the mountain. It is the ideal "theme park" for a city that has no theme. While the children rode the water slide I looked at the carvings on the face of the mountain: Borglum's grand design reduced to three figures—Lee, Jackson and Davis—and completed, the Lost Cause a spectacle Northerners pay to stare at for two minutes before they hit the road again. At first I was disgusted and thought, why not Frank Sinatra or Teddy Kennedy or The Three Stooges. Gradually, however, melancholy replaced disgust as it occurred to me that I am one of the last Southerners, a member of that generation that came to maturity just before the great debacle we call "the sixties." For me The War Between the States is too real to become a tourist attraction and yet not real enough—as it was to my grandmother—to pass on to my children. My grandmother. Suddenly I saw her—tall and beautiful amid her contradictions, defying logic, ghost-like yet solid as the figures of the men who loomed before me, captives like myself struggling to break free. ☆

1983

**The Southern Tradition:  
Twenty Years After Richard Weaver**  
*Thomas Landess*

The image of Richard Weaver that sticks in my memory is a disturbing one. He is standing before an audience in a conference room at Vanderbilt University, his gnome-like features barely rising above the tall, polished oak podium that holds his manuscript. He wears a brown, wrinkled suit, shiny at the elbows; and at midmorning he is already in need of a second shave.

Slightly nervous, he reads in an accent that is decidedly east Tennessee or western North Carolina; for despite his education and his years at the University of Chicago, he is still a mountain man, with a nasal twang and hard R's that sometimes sound more Midwestern than deep South. Because he is straining, his voice becomes almost shrill against a background of nearby crashing and shouting. The audience leans forward, cupping their ears, trying to make out his words above the racket.

For outside a wrecking crew is demolishing a neighboring building, and it is with this terrible confusion that Weaver is attempting to compete. He is trying to tell his listeners that the South, more than any other region, honors and preserves its past, that for this reason its poets and novelists have been able to draw on a tradition that is still vital and whole, despite the march of modernism with its idolatry of science and its commitment to the idea of progress.

But no one can hear him. The walls are trembling. The ground is shaking. The workmen are shouting. They are tearing down Kissam Hall, where all the Fugitive-Agrarians lived during their formative years, as did many generations of other Vanderbilt alumni. But the building is old, its architecture offensive to modern sensibilities; and Chancellor Harvie Branscomb—a great believer in progress—has commissioned the university architects to design a quadrangle of crackerbox dormitories to replace Kissam Hall. The quadrangle, according to the Chancellor, will be "approximately the dimensions of Harvard Yard."

Weaver, realizing that he is fighting a losing battle with the wrecking crew, begins to shuffle through the pages of his talk, skipping huge sections in order to bring the ordeal to a speedy conclusion. Someone from the Vanderbilt English Department rises and slips quietly out of the door, determined to stop the noise. After a couple of minutes he returns and shakes his head. The workmen

have to follow a rigid schedule. They have their orders. The roaring and crashing continue. Finally, in a clatter of crumbling bricks, Weaver finishes his paper and the audience gives him a great burst of applause that for a moment drowns out the noise of the wrecking crew. When the crowd files out the door they see that Kissam Hall is now nothing more than a heap of dust-clouded bricks with a few sections from a marble archway jutting out above the rubble.

As I say, this is a disturbing memory, partially because Weaver, a shy and modest man, found the chore of a public performance even more difficult than usual, but mostly because of the eerie symbolism of the occasion. The events outside the window mocked everything that Weaver was saying that day, and they did so at the direction of a man who opposed most of what Weaver and the Agrarians stood for, only the latest in a succession of chancellors who believed in modernism and the sanctity of scientific progress.

That was twenty-five years ago, however, and while the campus of Vanderbilt University has grown more unsightly with the years, the intellectual landscape has altered ever so slightly in Weaver's favor. The critics who scoffed at the dire predictions in *I'll Take My Stand* have grown silent as one by one the prophecies have been fulfilled. Fewer and fewer Americans trust the efficacy of science today, and if you ask young people if they believe the world is getting better and better they will tell you they don't think so.

Yet the larger battle that Richard Weaver was waging is by no means won. Indeed I would suggest that the outcome is still very much in the balance, with no clear sign that truth will win in the near future. For Weaver, more than any other twentieth-century Southerner, saw the struggle as a clash between right reason on the one hand and non-reason or ideology on the other. He saw the breakdown of Western civilization not as the consequence of industrialism and technology (these too are consequences) but rather as the result of faulty thinking—if not the absence of thought altogether; and in the course of exploring this conviction Weaver wrote a number of important books and essays, three of which, it seems to me, are seminal studies.

These three works—*Ideas Have Consequences*, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* and *The Southern Tradition at Bay*—lay important groundwork, awaiting the hand of a master builder, someone with philosophic insights commensurate with Weaver's to come along and pull the parts together, to oversee the Restoration. These books, I hasten to say, are not Kantian in their depth and complexity. To the contrary, they are deceptively simple, available to any intelligent reader

who is willing to devote time and thought to their arguments. Together they tell us precisely who we are at a moment in our history when most of us have forgotten, and for this reason alone they require close and respectful reading.

The first of these, *Ideas Have Consequences*, was published in 1948, at a time when Americans were in no mood for jeremiads. In the aftermath of a military victory over European fascism they were pleased with what they had become. Yet Weaver was saying that this nation in particular stood on the edge of the abyss.

As a consequence his study went unnoticed in the academy because it did not fit easily into the dialectic of the times and therefore did not lend itself to glib paraphrase. Thirty-five years later *Ideas Have Consequences* still demands a fuller discussion than anyone would stand still for, but its meaning is probably clearer now than in 1948 since the problems Weaver was addressing are more apparent and more crucial. Also, a number of important voices have been heard from since that time, voices that echo Weaver's language and ideas, giving them a new currency in the intellectual marketplace, rendering them ever more intelligible to the average reader.

Of course his initial premise still proves a formidable obstacle to most. He wants to argue that the structure and texture of twentieth-century life can be traced to a philosophical controversy in the 14th century, and most people who read, yea, even the *New York Times*, have difficulty thinking about any time so remote as the administration of Calvin Coolidge. Yet Weaver asks them to believe that the "nominalism" of William of Occam contained the seeds of modern chaos. The proposition called "Occam's Razor" (*Entities are not to be multiplied except as may be necessary*) attacks the idea that an absolute universal truth exists against which all our experience must be measured. Thus for Occam, and for all his descendants, such categories as "tree" and "human being" and "evil" are merely convenient ways of talking about the world, but they don't correspond to anything that is real or ultimately true. As Weaver puts it, "The practical result of nominalist philosophy is to banish the reality which is perceived by the intellect and to posit as reality that which is perceived by the senses." The result is a gradual decline of belief in the transcendent and the emergence of modern materialism and moral relativism.

At first Weaver doesn't really attempt to prove this proposition as a philosopher would, at least not through the rigid application of logic to a well-developed abstract argument. He simply states his convictions in the introductory chapter and then glosses them in

enough detail throughout the book so that the reader will know finally with what he is being asked to agree; so the "proof" comes in the body of this beautifully structured book and is cumulative in its rhetorical force. Read to its conclusion, *Ideas Have Consequences* is a devastating polemic, irresistible in its flashes of pure logic and its precise use of evidence.

Although the work is a defense of right reason, Weaver is no narrow rationalist. He makes it clear from the outset that reason itself is not the ultimate source of wisdom but rather sentiment, "an intuitive feeling about the imminent nature of reality." Reason, he points out, is not self-justifying. If one affirms its validity one does so acknowledging a prior commitment to the reasonable nature of reality, to what he calls "the metaphysical dream."

It is this "dream," a belief in transcendence, which has always characterized Western thought and informed its communities, a commitment to the dominion of an ultimate truth under which all other truths are organized and from which they take their meaning. Assuming the existence of those "things unseen" which give form and validity to "things seen," Weaver goes on to draw a conclusion that is unsettling to most twentieth-century sensibilities. He says that a belief in transcendence implies a commitment to political and social hierarchy and a consequent rejection of the egalitarianism that has more and more become the shibboleth of our age. If knowledge and virtue are attributes of the transcendent, he argues, then in choosing their leaders the electorate should seek out these qualities, which all men do not possess equally. The only purely democratic process, he suggests, would be government by lot, since any elective system is based on the implicit but logical idea that some people are better qualified to rule than others.

In discussing this point he has a few words to say about socialism, a tag he uses without apology. Here he shows his rhetorical teeth by terming the Marxists an outgrowth of what they most despise—the middle class, which Weaver describes as "risking little, terrified by change, its aim . . . to establish a materialistic civilization which will banish threats to its complacency." "The goal of social democracy," he says scornfully, "is scientific feeding."

Though Weaver makes it quite clear that he believes in the idea of equality under the law, he says that other kinds of egalitarianism which attempt to subvert natural authority merely want to substitute a bureaucratic hierarchy for the government that Jefferson envisioned, a hierarchy of "gifts and attainments." This segment of Weaver's essay probably seemed more outrageous and less credible

three decades ago than it does today, when the tyranny of a federal bureaucracy is beginning to intimidate even those who formerly urged its omnipotence (writers for the *New Republic* now openly complain about the U.S. Postal Service). Still even in the 1980s Weaver's attack on egalitarianism constitutes an implicit scandal to Americans as a whole, who have almost forgotten the formidable limitations the Founding Fathers placed on the conduct of American democracy.

Another dire consequence of egalitarianism, says Weaver, is the fragmentation of modern society into specialists who revere their own isolated roles in a world they regard as economic but who have no understanding of the community as a whole, much less the truths that once undergirded it. Knowledge of the whole of Creation was the aspiration of the medieval "philosophic doctor" and his successor, the renaissance gentleman; but in more recent times the so-called "expert" is so obsessed with his own fragment of the puzzle that he stands on the borderline of psychosis. Or so Weaver argues, echoing the sentiments of T.S. Eliot, Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom and a number of other literary critics who took up this problem in an effort to explain the plight of the modern poet in a technocratic society that no longer has use for his wisdom.

Weaver also considers the situation of modern artists and artisans, demonstrating that labor of any sort in contemporary society is regarded as a necessary evil, whereas in earlier times, with some transcendent idea of what work should accomplish, people took pride in their craftsmanship; for, as he puts it, "to labor is to pray, for conscientious effort to realize an ideal is a kind of fidelity." Again, it is the ideal, the transcendent, that gives meaning and dignity to everyday life. Thus, with the modern rejection of universal truth, even the daily activity of life-sustaining labor is rendered dull and meaningless, merely a means to material self-gratification. The result: built-in obsolescence and undisciplined art.

Turning to the popular press, Weaver argues that the counterfeit vision of the "media" (not his word) is distorted and simplistic in order to bring the public into easy conformity with current orthodoxy. Summarizing his opinion Weaver writes, "How . . . can one hesitate to conclude that we would live in greater peace and enjoy sounder moral health if the institution of the newspaper were abolished entirely?" His only optimistic observation is that despite persistent and dishonest opposition from the press, right-minded politicians are still elected to public office and skepticism is widening, even among uneducated people, as to the credibility of the media.

And what kind of society do the falsifiers of truth depict for Americans to admire? Weaver concludes that we are urged to be spoiled children, addicted to comfort and incapable of any heroic sacrifice, a generation of undisciplined egotists who are less and less willing to work for the plethora of material goods our leaders tell us we deserve. In addition, he points out that, driven by envy and bewildered by the presence of unequal wealth when he cannot admit unequal merit, modern man moves to take away the property of others with the fallacious argument that "property rights should not be allowed to stand in the way of human rights."

It is important to note here that Weaver considers property to be "the last metaphysical right" upon which other rights depend, and he does so not out of any deep-seated conviction that the free-market economy is superior to collectivism or that capitalism is the salvation of the West, but out of a reasonable assumption about the essential nature of freedom and man's capacity to act morally when he is owned outright by some impersonal social institution, however benevolently conceived. Here and only here does Weaver's traditionalism strike a sort of accommodation with the economic conservatives of the Northeast. The rest of the time they stand beyond the pale of his philosophy and are often the enemy, particularly when they smack of social Darwinism.

In the final analysis, what Weaver defends in this brilliant study is something as simple and elusive as truth, the kind of truth that men once believed in as a matter of course, even when they disagreed about its nature. But truth requires property to defend it; piety towards nature, neighbors, the past to nurture it; and a renewed respect for language to reveal it and to render it compelling. This truth is the tenuous thread he offers as a means to escape from the labyrinthine modernity that he has defined for us all too well.

Like *Ideas Have Consequences*, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* is one of those small books that has the power to alter the thinking of an entire generation. Unfortunately, it hasn't done so, largely, I suspect, because too many people believe it is for specialists in linguistic studies. And indeed two or three chapters are so restricted in their focus that they may be of no more than passing interest to the general reader. But the book as a whole is not about language alone but about social and political truths, about the ultimate realities which stand behind words and inform the structure of Being itself. In fact, of all Weaver's works I find this one the most original and incisive. Here he is on his own, no longer apprentice to the Agrarians, an

accomplished master ready to do things that Ransom, Davidson, and Tate could not do so well, if at all.

The book begins with a commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus* that serves as a framework for the essays that follow, defining for the reader the way in which the persuasive user of language, the *rhetor*, must approach words in order to be morally worthy of his task. I am not thoroughly familiar with the scholarship, but I suspect that this interpretation of Plato's famous dialogue (which is ostensibly about love rather than language) is one of the most original essays ever written on the Greek philosopher. Yet Weaver is surely right when he argues that Plato's two kinds of lovers—the selfish lover and the unselfish lover—are intended to be seen as rhetors who approach language, the object of their affection, with a desire either to exploit it for their own ends or else to serve the ultimate truth that language, at its best, reveals.

The false lover (*rhetor*) is the Sophist, who still uses any means to achieve his ends. He does not believe that the truth exists, so the manner in which he manipulates grammar, logic, and rhetoric is subject to no external restrictions, such as those of moral conscience. He therefore feels free to say anything that will help him possess what he most yearns after. He strives to use the beloved for his own gratification rather than to love for the beloved's sake. The Greek word for such love is "eros"; the English word is "lust." And such love is radically self-centered and finally immoral, since it grows out of a total disregard for the sanctity of the beloved, which, in Weaver's argument, is ultimate truth.

The true lover (*rhetor*), on the other hand, believes in the infinite worth of the beloved and will therefore use language in such a way as to reveal this worth rather than to distort or abuse it. This lover will not violate the sanctity of the beloved, will not falsify logic and language in order to achieve his ends; for he wants to be servant rather than master. Such love in the Greek is called "agape," and in older English usage was "charity," though significantly the distinction between "eros" and "agape" is impossible to make in our contemporary diction.

What Weaver is attacking in this essay is the loose morality that lies behind such modern rhetors as advertising copy writers and ambitious politicians, who will say anything in order to sell their product or to be elected to office. If such people know about logic at all they use their knowledge to deceive members of their audience rather than to enlighten them. In fact, the advertisements in magazines and on television offer prime classroom examples of fallacious

reasoning to the few college professors who still teach courses in formal logic; and the next best source for such negative examples is political discourse, not excluding the rhetoric found on the front pages of newspapers and in the CBS Evening News, Dan Rather reporting.

Weaver's commendation of the true lover, the rhetor, is no more than a plea for integrity in a world where the loss of any sense of transcendence has turned the human community into a rhetorical jungle. In making this plea he realizes that the traditional values he admires and advocates can survive and prosper only in a climate of respect for truth, whereas the values of modernism will wither and die under the severe scrutiny of an honest language.

If this essay is the most original and broad-ranging in the collection, Weaver's discussion of the Scopes trial is perhaps the most dramatic. Anyone who has seen *Inherit the Wind* or read retrospective accounts of the famous showdown at Dayton must think that Clarence Darrow was a quiet defender of justice while William Jennings Bryan was a blustering fool. They must also have concluded that Scopes' conviction was one of those mean and arbitrary judgments that are sometimes handed down in rural courts when simple people get their backs up and refuse out of prejudice to do what the law prescribes. To everyone who has accepted this interpretation of the events at Dayton, Weaver offers a devastating rebuttal, one that no honest observer could seriously quarrel with, so carefully mustered is his evidence.

In the first place, it seems that Bryan was by no means a fool in the conduct of the trial—at least not all the time. His famous attempt to defend Biblical literalism was, of course, ludicrous, even to those intelligent men who agreed with him on the subject. But, as Weaver points out, the question of Biblical or scientific truth should never have been at issue in the first place, that Bryan understood this point, and that he eloquently argued as much to the judge, who erred in failing to restrict the testimony to matters of legal relevance. In quoting extensively from the transcript of the trial, Weaver demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that at one stage of the proceedings it was Bryan rather than Darrow who was the masterful logician and that he all but won the legal case before he ever took the stand to talk about Adam and Noah and the Whale.

In the first place, as Bryan argued (and as Weaver affirms), the wisdom of the Tennessee law forbidding the teaching of any creation theory (whether scientific or Biblical) was not an issue to bring before the court. It was, instead, a matter properly addressed in the

legislature, where such laws, according to the federal and state constitutions, are to be debated and either passed or rejected. If the law is unwise, Bryan argued, then it should be repealed. But once passed, it has to be obeyed, unless one wants to argue that the people of a state, who pay for the establishment of public schools through their taxes, have no right to say what subjects are to be taught there—a proposition patently absurd. You couldn't simply claim that because a few self-appointed experts say that the theory of evolution should be taught, the courts can presume to set aside the judgment of the people of the state.

Darrow, of course, called to his aid a number of expert witnesses who argued the truth of evolution as an "accepted fact." Bryan, however, countered by saying that the truth or falsity of evolution was finally irrelevant, since a number of truths and facts were not taught in the public schools for one reason or another.

In discussing this exchange Weaver points out that the truth of evolution was by no means a "fact," as Darrow and his experts argued, but something two times removed from fact. A fact, he says, is a verifiable entity in time and space. To suggest that facts have a relationship to one another, as Darwin does, is to express an opinion about fact. To say that this opinion is true is to express an opinion about an opinion about a fact, a distinction that Bryan seemed better able to make than Darrow, who wanted to argue that the state of Tennessee had no right to suppress "truth," whatever the social consequences.

At this point Bryan delivered what should have been the *coup de grace* in an exchange you can bet Mencken never reported. He pointed out that Darrow—who now maintained that the state had no right to omit the theory of evolution from its curriculum—had only recently defended Leopold and Loeb on precisely the opposite grounds. The community, Darrow had argued in Illinois, was partially to blame for the "thrill murder" of a young boy by two college students. And why? Because these killers had been inspired to commit their cold-blooded act by the writings of Nietzsche, *which they found in the public library*. If the public allows such dangerous ideas to be broadcast, Darrow had thundered, then how can they hold these young impressionable students entirely to blame for what they did.

Bryan quickly pointed out the horrid inconsistency of Darrow's argument in Illinois and his argument in Tennessee; and he was not too foolish or too senile to note that Nietzsche's theory was based in some measure on the theory of evolution, which Darrow now wanted to say was undeniably true and therefore could not be banned from

the curriculum of Tennessee schools.

In Weaver's account we see a Bryan and a Darrow heretofore hidden from the public eye. Instead of the doddering old bigot we find the aging orator who still has a few arrows left in his quiver, the great champion of the people who makes one last stand for their rights, this time in the face of a new breed of technocrats who want to control education without any interference from those who establish and pay for it. Darrow, on the other hand, is no longer quite the doughty defender of truth but rather a seedy sentimentalist who uses his rhetorical powers first on one side and then the other, wherever whim or fame or the Almighty Dollar beckons. And the contrast between the two illustrates precisely the thesis that Weaver explores in *Ideas Have Consequences*: that those who believe in truth are better able to make distinctions than those who argue from the gut of their own egos.

Turning from Bryan and Darrow, he takes up Abraham Lincoln and Edmund Burke, and here I have a problem with his perspective. If he errs at all in this volume, it is in his love for what he calls "the argument from definition," a deductive approach that deals in abstract principles rather than in particulars of the concrete world. In contrast to the argument from definition he cites the "argument from circumstance," an inductive approach that draws on the particularities surrounding an issue without significant reference to abstract truth. I will say more about this blind spot later, though I don't believe it is crucial to an understanding of Weaver's thought as a whole. At this point suffice it to say that he chooses Lincoln to illustrate the argument from definition and Burke for the argument from circumstance, questionable choices, I think, though Weaver's illustrative passages are convincing enough.

Since Weaver himself is a believer in the validity of ultimate definitions, why should he choose Abraham Lincoln for his model of this method, since Lincoln was among the most pragmatic abusers of legal definition in his unrestrained efforts to save the Union? On the other hand, why should Weaver—a traditionalist by temperament—choose a like-minded thinker, Edmund Burke, to illustrate what he considers the "lower road" in formal argument (though a permissible one)?

I don't know the answer to these questions, but I suspect that he adopted this strategem because he knew his audience and concluded that if he hoped to make any impact on their modern, secular sensibilities he would have to do so by shocking them into some new understanding of the nature of rhetoric. "To those of you who want

to argue pragmatically," he may have been saying, "look at your greatest hero, Lincoln, who at his best argues from immutable principle. On the other hand, look at Burke, whose philosophy you despise, and see how often he argues the way you do. Which would you rather emulate? And are you not now ready to reconsider your rejection of the idea of higher truth?"

At worst, this strategy makes a few of us uncomfortable, though we cannot deny the persuasive selection of examples that he places before us. We can only say in reply that Lincoln often argued from circumstance and that Burke argued from definition, though never without some reference to the real world in which all human action takes place. (If I had to choose between the two, I would take Burke and the argument from circumstance; but such a choice would surely be a false dilemma, and Weaver is by no means suggesting that we must be impaled on its horns.)

The other essays in this volume are almost as rewarding as those I have singled out, though perhaps a little less innovative and profound. But all are directly relevant to the idea that rhetoric and thought go hand in hand and that together they constitute the most vital informing force in the political order. To many of us who have made a career of studying language this book is awesome and moving, the only one of Weaver's studies, it seems to me, that gives us the full measure of his quiet and impregnable genius. Alone it could stand as the achievement of a lifetime—and one that would bid fair to have a perennial and curative effect on the scholarly community.

*The Southern Tradition at Bay*, though published posthumously in 1968, was written over twenty-five years earlier as a doctoral dissertation and then revised later for publication. Significantly Cleanth Brooks was Chairman of the Examining Committee and both Robert Penn Warren and John Crowe Ransom receive thanks in Weaver's original preface. But written acknowledgment of his debt is unnecessary, because the text itself amply reveals the degree to which his thought is an extension of Agrarianism. Indeed the published version of this study could be regarded as a formal and scholarly presentation of the arguments made in *I'll Take My Stand* and in other diverse essays of that group during the Thirties.

For one thing, Weaver begins where they began—with an attack on science and technology as "the most powerful force of corruption in our age." Such a statement seems almost commonplace in the 1980s, because what Weaver and the Agrarians were saying a half century ago has now become part of a new and confused leftist orthodoxy so mindless and militant that if one didn't know better, one

might be tempted to feel sorry for the military-industrial complex.

Of course the young street politicians of our day have yet to see the connection between a sinister technology and the ills of widespread urbanization, something that Weaver makes explicit in this volume when he writes, "Man has lost piety toward Nature in proportion as he has left her and shut himself up in cities with rationalism for his philosophy." Against this trend in the nation as a whole, Weaver juxtaposes the South, which, he says, is "alone among the sections . . . in regarding science as a false messiah." Why this statement is true really constitutes the subject of his study as a whole, and he explains in fine and abundant detail the several important characteristics of the modern Southerner's heritage which have fortified him against the assault of modernity.

First, he says, the region from its earliest times subscribed to a "feudal system" patterned after a declining European order. Agricultural in its economic bias, Southern society was hierarchical in structure, with the plantation as the model of the community and each member of the plantation household assuming a definite station and task in the scheme of things. "In the social order which was overthrown by the Civil War," Weaver writes, "there existed a feature of feudalism incomprehensible to the modern mind with its egotism and enlightened selfishness, subordination without envy, and superiority without fear."

Even the Agrarians had not been willing to go so far, and in essay after essay they deny that the South was aristocratic (Weaver says that in some respects it was), and they point most often to the yeoman farmer as a normative figure rather than to the plantation owner. In fact, Weaver does in this study what the Agrarians have been mistakenly accused of doing—offering a militant defense of the Old Regime. And while Weaver is careful to include qualifications, in a sense he is the most unreconstructed of them all.

He exhibits this quality most clearly in his brief discussion of the code of chivalry, an important element in the temperament of the Old South which he feels has affected the evolving nature of the region, even into modern times. Without pursuing the matter too vigorously, he calls Southern chivalric notions "a romantic idealism, closely related to Christianity, which makes honor the guiding principle of conduct," and he argues that "it was an institution of strong and, on the whole, good influence," though at least one observer has blamed it for the loss of the War.

His explanation for the appearance of such a tradition is altogether different from that of Mark Twain and a host of latter-day critics

who have said that Southerners took too seriously the spirit of what they read in the romances of Sir Walter Scott. The Scott theory is widely accepted, but Weaver's account is down-to-earth, historical, and less archly literary: "Since chivalry has been one of the main traditions of European civilization," he says, "it was not strange that a chivalric code should develop in the South, which was disposed to accept rather than reject European institutions." Simple enough, and more credible than Twain and his followers, who have never bothered to explain why Southerners would have been attracted to Scott's works in the first place if they had not been *predisposed* to admire the chivalric. Weaver's discussion of the gentleman and his education is much fuller and considerably more rewarding than his treatment of chivalry, though here again he is cutting against the grain of current mythology. Much has been written in refutation of the idea that Southerners were educated at all, much less that they were given the "humanistic" preparation that Weaver supposes, an education that emphasized "the classic qualities of magnificence, magnanimity, and liberality." Yet Weaver offers numerous examples and convincing glosses; his treatment is more than merely sentimental opinion, which is all the Negative side in this debate can muster.

His treatment of Southern religion, like that of the Agrarians, suggests that the region's piety is constant but compromised by "doctrinal innocence"; for, as he says, "the average Southerner knew little and appears to have cared less about casuistical theology or the metaphysics underlying all religion; what he recognized was the acknowledgement, the submissiveness of the will, and that general respect for order, natural and institutional, which is piety. A religious solid South preceded the political solid South."

The benefits of such theological laxity, according to Weaver, were a high degree of religious quiescence and a belief among neighbors of various sects that "a certain portion of life must remain inscrutable." He admits, however, that the shortcomings of this attitude are more far-reaching. For in an epilogue to *The Southern Tradition at Bay* he says that one of the great errors of the South has been "a failure to study its position until it arrived at metaphysical foundations." No Southerner, he argues, "was ever able to show why the South was right *finally*," and as a consequence, when the region was attacked by its Puritan enemies, Southerners had nothing to offer in response but impotent and uncontrollable anger. What has always been needed, he says, is a *Summa Theologia*, a comprehensive study of the Southern mind written by a Burke or a Hegel instead of random essays by lawyers and journalists.

On such a *magnum opus*, he says, a new and successful initiative might still be mounted, "one which would give the common man a world view completely different from that which he has constructed out of his random knowledge of science." Such a counteroffensive—which he feels must be carried to the enemy by poets, artists, and intellectuals—would involve remanning "the barricades of revealed Christianity, of humanism, of sentiment," though not, he says, in the name of the Lost Cause, whose final offensive failed in the 1890s with the organization of the United Confederate Veterans and their subsequent failure to attract new recruits from the young. An effective movement, he concludes, must subtly incorporate the values of the past while exploiting the rhetoric of progress and the future.

It is impossible with justice to gloss and praise this substantial volume, which is richer and more complicated than Weaver's other works, though perhaps not so original. As Donald Davidson points out in his introduction to the published edition, Weaver uses every conceivable type of source in examining his subject—political, literary, personal, public—and he does so with careful attention to dissenting opinion and to embarrassing exceptions. He is neither unequivocally positive about the character of his region nor naively optimistic about its future. But he does offer something more than tenuous apologies or outright apostasy. He has written a call to battle that we can ignore only at our peril, and he may have written the very work he calls for at the end of his long and rewarding study. Not to consider that possibility is to pay him less homage than he clearly deserves.

Weaver has been dead twenty years now, and he has been missed every single day; but the same old wrecking crew is with us still, tearing down what is old and well-built in order to throw up something modern and transient, their mouths pursed, their worried little eyes blinking nervously. They constantly consult their watches, new ones which they have to press in order to see. They are behind schedule. American society should have been torn down long before now. The foundation for an entirely new economic system was to have been poured last Thursday. And now Reagan is in the White House, which means further delays (though not as many as they once feared). They shout to one another. The bulldozers roar into action. The driver sets down the grade. And they're off in a flurry of endless activity, for they know that you can't destroy a world if you don't keep moving.

At the same time, somewhere in a classroom or library, Richard Weaver through the printed word continues to explain where we

have gone wrong and how we can correct our error. He insists that we have time if we will only proceed with reason and prudence. No one has won or lost anything—at least, not yet.

Indeed Weaver and his mentors, the Agrarians, speak more forcefully in the year 1983 than they did in the Thirties and Forties. Yet some of us who admire and believe them are not sure if they are prophets of a genuine cultural renaissance or the last survivors of an order that has, like all its predecessors, doomed itself to final destruction. It depends on how our day has gone, doesn't it? Or what we read in the morning newspapers. None of us is as certain about things as Weaver was, though he never held out false hopes or underestimated the difficulty of a Restoration.

But of course he brought some strengths to the battle that most of us lack, and I would like to say just a word about them. First, however, in deference to his own argumentative practice, I feel obliged to mention what I consider to be his shortcomings, which are so inconsequential as to warrant no more than a sentence or two. First, it seems to me that he is occasionally just a bit too Platonic to credit the full complexity of human beings and their corporate behavior. He has God the Father (the Mind) well in hand, but from time to time he has a little trouble with the Son and the Holy Spirit. You don't always have a problem solved when you explain it in reasonable terms, and there is a case to be made for a folk wisdom that contributes as much to political understanding as do the Philosopher Kings. Weaver didn't often forget how wise his own uneducated mountain neighbors could be, but he sometimes did. And they would never have been caught using anything but an argument from circumstance, believing, as they did, in the absolute truth of the Incarnation.

Second, like Davidson, Ransom and the early Tate, Weaver thinks and says too little about the Church's role in the definition of Western culture—past, present, and future. (Only Brooks and Lytle are sound here.) The medieval certitude he admired was, after all, a characteristic of Christendom, only Platonic by way of St. Augustine and, to a far lesser degree, St. Thomas Aquinas. But it was the body and the soul of the Church as much as its mind that gave order and meaning to the medieval world, and I could not imagine a Restoration of the sort for which Weaver worked that would not have a revitalized Christianity at its center.

Weaver knew these things most of the time and took them into account. In addition, he brought some extraordinary virtues to the great struggles of our age, virtues which the rest of us lack. First, he had a genuinely philosophic mind rather than merely a polemical

one. Davidson, the best polemicist in the group, was content to muster his rhetoric for The Cause without probing too deeply into the substratum of meaning that would engage a disinterested student of Western thought. Tate and Lytle delved more profoundly beneath the surface as they ground their axes, polemicists with definite philosophical import. Weaver, however, is always the philosopher first, though he never hesitates to fly his colors and do battle with the enemy. *Ideas Have Consequences*, therefore, has a logical rigor and a formal structure which give the work an air of authority that it would lack as a mere essay of opinion.

Then, too, Weaver had a rugged honesty about him that made his writings both ingenuous and intimidating. At times he was almost blunt in his statements about such controversial issues as equality, freedom, and the press. Where his logic led him he followed, and when he came to an unpopular conclusion he was not afraid to state it plainly, the way mountain people generally do. He could muster rhetoric for every legitimate purpose, but he never used it to mitigate or conceal truth in order to placate the spirit of the age. The rest of us, for the most part, lack his courage, and as a consequence fall short of his strength and power.

Finally, he generated an aura of absolute faith in all that he wrote and said. By the time he finished *The Southern Tradition at Bay* he had put socialism behind him, reordered his thinking, and come to a final accommodation with the world. And while he changed his mind about some matters in later years, he never gave an inch on the fundamentals. For this reason you can read his works—each quite different in concept and focus—and know that he was the same man at the end that he was when, late in life, he came over to the losing side and took his station beside a ragged and beleaguered band of defenders. Before Ransom, Davidson and the rest he was taken; and we are left with his indispensable legacy of thought and with the challenge of a life lived in service to a splendid vision of order that no crew of sleek upstarts can ever tear down. ☆

**The Search for Order in American Society***Andrew Lytle***1981**

"Yet once more, O Ye laurels, yet once more, O Ye myrtles brown..." Once any schoolboy would have recognized the convention, if not the necessity for an apostrophe to the Muse. Now we address others out of the authority of our egos, relying entirely upon circumstances and our introspective autonomy. Today this attitude towards man and the cosmos is common to all occupations.

Such heresy would have appalled the Greco-Roman world. The classical poet, statesman, or general would have averted his eyes from one so recklessly defiant of the Fates — from one so publicly impious. Even centuries later, Milton, among other poets, felt the need to rely upon something beyond talent and skill.

It was more than a convention among the ancients. To tamper with the Fates, more powerful than the gods, involved the matter of hubris both in life and the arts. Greek tragedies, those that have come down to us, are dramatic renditions of what pride, concretely, can do to human beings, either by one human to another, or by the distant intervention of the Fates in their own ugly shapes or by the gods. There is no more poignant appeal than that of the child Iphigenia saying, "But what have I done? Whip me if I've done wrong." This brutal sacrifice of a daughter by her father to further his ambition would make even the keys of a computer sigh.

It is impossible to write a tragedy today. Man has become a hostage to society. As hostage he no longer is responsible for himself or for his acts. Either the family or living conditions are asked to take the blame. Sometimes it is the mother's milk that has soured in him, and he never did no good. Or he becomes a criminal, since he has not gotten all the material things advertisement makes him feel are his birthright. Women often are his special victims. By the time the Press takes over, there are so many crimes and the details are repeated so often (always modified by the word "alleged") that, like a piece of music being killed, the crime ceases to have an actuality in the reader's mind. Through mass media we receive everything filtered through distant views; so that vital actions are becoming more and more abstract, until one person suffers, and then it is too late to comprehend.

Without a tragic sense there is no moral sense, and without a moral sense, violence, uncontrollable and meaningless, rots what is left of institutional society. You can put two policemen on every

street and a judge on every block, but without a sense of what is right or wrong, crime becomes the normal state and criminals walk the streets because the courts are crowded. In the crystalized stage of civilization, that of the world cities, to use a Spenglerian term, "forms harden, roots of the organic units of the state are lifted into the shallow pots of a Garden of Adonis, where they bloom shortly and die, removed from a rich continuous earth."

Richard Weaver's book, *Ideas Have Consequences*, makes a profound analysis of the predicament the Western world finds itself in. He picks the twelfth century and the Realist-Nominalist controversy as the time Christendom made the wrong decision. Occam's razor cut off the sustaining universals and put the truth in the individual mind, and that meant ultimately dependence upon experience. As Joseph Campbell says, "theology was abandoned in favor of psychology." I would like to add that without any absolute set of values to which action can be referred, and Weaver agrees, experience is largely that of sensation. There is the often-heard, "to learn from experience." That is the one thing you cannot do. We may suffer or delight in experience, but since we never have the same kind twice, that is, experience that is exact enough to permit generalization, we see at once how ideas have consequences. As a corollary to this, the word "Modern" replaces the word "Christian." It is like the elastic on an old woman's drawers. It will fit any shape. It is closely allied to Progress, that Whig word which makes an advance in time necessarily an improvement over the past, merely because it is the latest thing. Nobody seems to remember Queen Elizabeth's "progresses," those month-long visits to powerful lords. When she left their domains, she left them bankrupt and harmless. But to speak of modern man is self-deluding. There is no such being. At what time of the day or night does the natural man turn modern? At twelve o'clock? Two minutes after midnight? Now? Yesterday? I offer in our predicament a more exact word. The "momentary" man; that man who no longer has location, who is forever on his way, speeding from one inn to another, to the same bed that is not the same bed, to poor cuisines served in the same false ornament of supposedly foreign architecture. And because of the failure of our educational system, nobody recognizes the falsity of the Spanish rococo, or the French provincial bedroom suite.

I'm not going to bring coals to Newcastle and summarize Weaver's philosophical and learned argument. I am entirely in agreement. I am an artist, and it happens that I prefer the truths of mythology to those of dialectics, not in any way believing that they

disagree, but that they occupy different parts of the mind. As a myth of pertinent relevancy for us today as in the past, I am going to explore a little the Garden of Eden. Many think that legends and myths of the ancient world come from Sumeria, presumably the first cultural kingdom to emerge from the mists of time. This is mostly speculation, and so must be the possibility that it is from the tales of Sumeria that our Garden of Eden derives. The J writer, to whom many biblical scholars ascribe the second account in Genesis of the Garden, left out a most interesting detail: Adam's first wife, Lilith. Now, she was a good girl. When she ran away, it took four angels to catch and hold her. She must have been a destructive part of the Mother goddess, until the masculine triumph in Heaven left her out of the Hebrew canon and she sank into oral legend. So, it came about that the Hebrew patriarchs, as well as Christendom, accepted the J writer's story of the beginning of things. Nor should the cogency of its meaning be lost to us now, especially one aspect of the Garden's drama. (I make this seemingly obvious point, since I find that one difficulty in teaching is the students know scarcely anything of the Bible or ancient history or the myths and fables of the classical world, as well as not knowing how to spell or construct a sentence.)

Let me summarize. The all-unknowable, un-namable, invisible power we refer to as God, for His ineffable reason, assumed a limitation. He became a Creator, that is an artist, and in six days made the cosmos within which we abide. Like all artists, at the end of a masterpiece He needed a rest. But to rest there must be a place agreeable enough to rest in. And so He made a garden where He could walk in the cool of the day. He made all the herbs and growing things. He experimented with animals, the crawling things, and those that had wings. Wherever He looked, up or down, before or around him, He saw that his artifacts were good. In the midst of all this brilliant performance, alas, the Creator got lonesome. Apparently He had not expected this. So He then made out of the dirt of the Garden an artifact in His own image and called him Adam.

All forms are contained in that part of the mind known as the imagination. All forms, when substantially completed, make an image, and this image is a symbol of a certain quality or act. This is the basic authority for the guidance of all craftsmen, and for the definition of what a craft is.

Naturally, all forms find themselves in the mind of God, else chaos would have persisted in its Uroboric inertia. Since man is made in the image of God, he has inherited this state of cognition, although no man can truly be said to create. Only God can breathe

life into matter. All man as artist can do is imitate out of his private talent and vision the action and phenomena already established.

As Potentate of the Garden it was not God's intention to make Adam into an artist. What He needed was a gardener. Some will say that gardeners have many crafts. Be that as it may, the Garden needed to be tended by one with attributes sufficient to consort with the Landlord in his leisure moments. To be able to look after the flora and all growing things, Adam needed a limited power, with the emphasis on limited, that is a power sufficient only to his office. Anybody who has ever farmed knows that cattle and hogs can get in a corn field and ruin it, or crows pluck corn deep out of the ground. So God called before Adam all the birds of the air, the beasts of the fields, the things that crawled, and had him name them. And what Adam called them, they were called. Adam also named Eve. Now, to name is to have power over what is named. Primitive tribesmen know this. They will never tell their true names to a foreigner. And nobody knows the name of God.

Notice that God, master of the cosmos and landlord of the Garden, its core, did not ask Adam to name the flora. The flora was there before Adam was made, containing along with the rest of the universe the mystery which it represented. To make clear to Adam his limits, God forbade him, as we know, to eat of the tree whose fruit contained a juice only the gods could digest: good and evil; those opposites whose balance ordered the motion of things. There was another tree at the center of the Garden God was careful not to mention: the tree of life. Be content, He was implying, with using and looking after all growing things, but make no effort to explore or investigate the secrets of life or of the surrounding firmament. All the while, Eve, standing at the side of Adam and a little back, with her eyes cast demurely upon the ground, was listening to the admonition. Now the ground is the natural habitat of the serpent. No doubt Eve saw him wink and crawl away, towards the trees at the center of the Garden. Else how would she have known which tree was which?

Now the artist must not only look at his artifact and see that it is good. He must also be surprised by what he has done, far more than he set out to do. This is the secret of the master stroke that pulls all of it together and sets it forth as the masterpiece it is. Such distinguishes the work of an artist from the formula.  $H_2O$  must always be water and not occasionally carbolic acid. The very thing that makes the formula work for a science makes it inane and dull for fiction. Or verse. It leaves out, as John Crowe Ransom argues in *God Without Thunder*, contingency. Well, the Creator discovered that the juice of

the apple had a most disturbing quality for the peace of the Garden. (This is always the risk the artist takes.) Concealed behind the smooth skin of the fruit were the laws of nature, more particularly appetite, the appeal of which to his creatures God foresaw at once, in the entire range of its implications. Indiscriminate appetite would replace the Garden of Innocence, or the suspension of life, however you call it, with a cannibal wilderness. Appetite is not only carnal. That is vexing enough. There was also in the knowledge of good and evil an appetite for unrestrained power. This would change all the rules of the game. This was no threat to God's power. The threat was to the well-being of His creatures.

Not disobedience, but the sorrow of chaos's return is the lesson the myth of the Garden has for mankind. We of the West have rushed to misconstrue its warnings. The moment the European mind accepted materialism as the *summum bonum*, that is the dirt of the ground without the breath of God upon it, it initiated the repetitive catastrophes of Babel. The confusion of tongues is the prelude to downfall. It describes excessive specialization which reaches the stage where no master craftsman can interpret the disparate groups of skills upon which a state must stand.

We all think we know how it came out. Certainly the Garden would be no place where God could any longer walk in the cool of the day. In His quandary all He could think to do was forbid Adam to eat of that particular tree. He did not mention at first the tree of life. Now the subtlest beast of the field, the serpent with the speaking head, knew that Adam was obedient, and he spoke to Eve only in the most general terms about good and evil. He did emphasize what he thought she would like—to live in the highest fashion. The irony lies just there. She and Adam were already living as the gods, without any of the crushing responsibility and knowledge of what that meant.

The first result of this great change found the intimacy between God and His creatures diminished. He took to high places and spoke out of whirlwinds, and Adam and his family found themselves wayfarers in this world. But in the wilderness of their exile these creatures did not forget their genesis: they were made in the image of their Creator. If they had been cast out to suffer the laws of nature, they could take comfort in the knowledge of their heritage. No matter how disguised it might become, they partook of their Divine ancestry. The proof of this on the man's part was an innate need to make things. Nothing he could do would so nourish his spirit as working at some craft. This gave him a limited power over nature and freed him from nature's most pitiless law, cannibalism. With children, Eve dis-

covered she had a family, and this made bearable the sorrow of birth. She also discovered that a family has to eat, and fairly regularly. No cook with many skills likes to keep moving about; so gradually, to skip eons of time, cultures and civilizations began to appear, and they mostly were based on the family as the unit of the community. Christendom's structure was just this. Every man was a craftsman from the lord to the peasant, and every person belonged to some kind of family. Manners and mores defined the forms and laws of society. Weaver reminds us that the French mark for civilization is etiquette and good food, which they limit to themselves and the Chinese.

It is not in the French nature to hide any light, no matter how dim, under a bushel. Be that as it may, a traditional cuisine, composed of culinary crafts, the basic ones inherited, does two things to stabilize society. It demands good manners, and this restrains appetite and thus makes for the etiquette of the table, which in turn makes for a respectful savoring of the dishes served, good conversation, and a celebration of a social amity among the diners. It maintains leisure, which gives pause for reflection, upon which the arts and, for the last four hundred years, history had depended. Memory, through recollection, into song, I believe is the classic inheritance the Western world has abandoned in its reduction of man to his physical dimensions. But I can give you a more homely example. The taste and odor of the family victuals, which has the common taste of a province or region, binds the solitary to the family and the family to a place. Wander I don't care how far, or how well you eat exotic or strange foods, there will come a time when you hunger to eat some family dish or bread. It is usually bread. When I was a boy in Paris, I would have given a hundred dollars for a hoecake and a mess of turnip greens with two poached eggs on top and marinated onions on the side. But it was the bread I longed for.

A good cuisine does a second thing. It respects the fruits, vegetables and meats it uses. It does not take from nature these gifts for mere survival, which is the economy of eating today what you get today, with no thought of tomorrow. It receives these gifts ceremonially and, at times, with ritual care. That of course is the traditional society, one maintained hierarchically and hieratically. It accepts the curse, that we all live, man, beast, fowl, fish, and herb, in a cannibal world. Only by ceremony and ritual, a common respect for all living things, can we mitigate, make bearable, the knowledge of how we live. The Indians, the most religious and conservative of peoples, made peace with nature. In hunting they always asked permission of the deer or the bear before they killed it. And since their clans took

the names of animals, there was no indiscriminate slaughter until we arrived upon the scene.

We taught the Indians our habits: make war on nature. Our retribution appeared in the form of the Momentary Man, who obliterates both time and space, living in the sensation of the moment or the suspension of every one but that of the monotony of speed. His table is the cafeteria, food without ceremony, where the solitary never dines, only eats.

I have a feeling I am stating platitudes. But when I try to elevate the tone, I wonder about the role of a male Cassandra. The eyes of thirty are not the eyes of seventy. At thirty the landscape looked familiar. It no longer does. Wherever you went, you were aware that families composed the community, in town or country. There were enough family-sized farms and private ownership of business to balance the abstract corporations of industry. Automobiles travelled the roads and turnpikes, but the roads were bad enough to restrain the disruption of families. The Agrarian position was this: if this country could only keep the equilibrium between capitalism, or the propertied state, and finance corporate industry (without which some foreign power might take us over) we would continue to lead a better life. It was business with actual owners in control or abstract corporations ruled by managers and dominated by what John Taylor of Caroline County, Virginia, called the paper and patronage aristocracy. This last was the genesis of all totalitarian societies, that is servile states, and it doesn't matter whether they are called Communism, Fascism, or Democracy.

But I don't want to go over the Agrarian proposals. These can be found in print. It was never a movement. We wrote with our backs to the wall by way of protest. It was the dramatic 1929 crash which made us seem to be prophets. Indeed, it has turned out that we were. None of us thought it could be as bad as it has come to be.

Richard Weaver was at Vanderbilt long enough to be influenced by the ideas generated there. His proposal for salvation—it is no less than that—is restoration of private property and the forms of language, and ultimately of Literature. Certainly he was one of the first to show the need of purifying language. Words mean what they say. When they do not properly express meaning, communion is on the way to being lost. In the nineteen thirties language was not so obviously threatened. More men knew then who they were. There was an eagerness to volunteer for the First World War. This was not so obvious in the Second World War, and the last one was advertised by its deserters. Men volunteer when they have something to lose,

especially something they believe in and love.

The ingrained need for property is not yet totally lost, but without a proper understanding of language the proprietor will be hard put to defend it, and his enjoyment will be curtailed. And this is where a proper education comes in. A proper education would be as near like the old Liberal Arts as is possible today. It would introduce its scholars to the various areas of learning. It would discipline the mind, so that the graduate can perform in diverse circumstances. And the mind would flourish because it would be a poetic mind, that is, it would have a constant view of the wholeness of things.

Such a program would return us to an aristocratic education, literally the aristos Krateo, the rule of the best. It would take bold and intelligent young people to enter such a curriculum. They will have to learn how to restrain the mass media they were brought up on. It's been my experience that the best of the young are eager to learn, just as they are quick to despise and ignore the spurious. As graduates of such a training they would have a larger knowledge and a belief in something outside themselves. And it just might be that, returning home, they with their sense of order, would find those who are lost turning to them for guidance. The communities less and less are representing what a community should be. They may help them to recuperate. This all will take time, but in a crisis the effects of such an education would proliferate.

Literature can never take the place of a commonly accepted and practiced belief in religion, but we must not forget that the Word was a creative power of God, and that it was made flesh in Christ. To want to restore a lost faith will not restore it. But in a materialistic and secular world, language and literature, and the richness of language is literature, seem to me the best if not the only way to rescue us from the rapid advance of a confusion of tongues. This knowledge will clear our eyes, allow us to see that we who have thought of ourselves as rich have only been profligate, and that our progress has been the progress of Hogarth's heir. Then instead of the habit of gluttonous appetite, safety and comfort, we may know again faith, hope and charity. But we will not know them until we correct our distortions by a sober reconsideration of the natural virtues: justice, prudence, temperance and fortitude. ☆

## **PART FIVE**

# **MEMORABLE CONVERSATIONS**

*It was an eight o'clock class, that excruciating hour designed to separate true acolytes from dilettantes. Mr. Cleanth Brooks, co-author of Understanding Poetry, on which my generation cut its critical teeth, was almost always here in the classroom before the first of us, a short, round-faced man whose eyes blinked from behind thick lenses and who stooped forward as he walked so that his astonishingly tiny feet seemed always to be trying to catch up to his center of gravity. He was dapper. The leather of his Oxfords shone, his charcoal gray flannels held a knife's edge crease, and his brown, herringbone Harris tweed jacket was cut with the insouciant perfection of the great Ivy League haberdashers. Only his ties were on occasion rebellious, a reminder of the West Tennesseean blood that coursed beneath his exquisite manners.*

*They distinguished him then as they do today. In that musical Mississippi accent, he revealed to us the disciplines of rhythm, language, and imagery that, when perfectly harnessed, can produce the magic of a poem. In suggesting his reading of say, a sonnet by Yeats, he shunned any semblance of imposing it. He would begin, "On ...the one hand," presenting his views, followed inevitably, by, "On ... the o-ther hand," presenting an opposing, a different, view. (As he grew older, we, his ex-students, grinned to hear him begin, "On...the o-ther hand," so tender and scrupulous had he become about the opinions of others.)*

*He was so fair, his enunciation so gentle, his manner so mild, that one can easily miss the steely and analytical faculties that have established Cleanth Brooks as possibly the most vigorous as well as one of the most sensitive of the so-called (he doesn't much cotton to the label) "New Critics."*

*At Yale, his kindness was legendary: he read all our poetical efforts, spending precious hours in his Davenport College office (ever so gently) criticizing them. Among his greatest contributions to literature may be that he taught most of us so well to distinguish between the good and the not-so-good that clods like myself finally desisted in our assaults on the Muse. If you come upon The Well-Wrought Urn, A Shaping Joy, or his two masterful works on William Faulkner, or, perhaps a tattered and much marked copy of Understanding Poetry, treat yourself to a revolution — and marvel at the worth of a man who at age 75 is still teaching us that the only intellectually reputable reaction to emotionally tendentious works like "Ode to the West Wind" is a horse laugh.*

—Reid Buckley

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How much is the South changing? You have argued that the South has remained unchanged in fundamental ways. I believe you cite John Shelton Reed to support your view that the South enjoys a certain stability in attitude toward family, religion, place and history. In fact you have suggested that the South is becoming even more different and distinct ...

BROOKS: Yes. That's what Reed says. I can't vouch for it, and I'm wary of sociologists generally. But Mr. Reed is one who writes the King's English literately. And he's come up with some surprising conclusions.

Certain things in the South are changing surely. We have to admit the growth of airports, skyscrapers, Holiday Inns, national advertising, radio and television shows. But Reed claims that, as you burrow down a little beneath those, you will find the more basic differences—differences in attitude, language and custom—those are actually defining themselves more accurately.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: But you say you're not sure—that you can't vouch for it?

BROOKS: Well, I've sojourned for so long in New England. When I come back, it's like coming home. Yet many of my Southern friends say, "Oh Cleanth, it's all changing. It's all changing." I think they're wrong. But then, I could be wrong.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: In *The Dispossessed Garden*, Lewis Simpson speaks of the Southern writer's "covenant with memory and history." Are Southern writers today further removed from those circumstances that shaped great literature?

BROOKS: Lewis Simpson worries about that more than I do. But he is a first-rate observer. So we have to take his concern seriously.

I think this: the Southern writer today is going to have to write in a different way from Faulkner and other Southern writers of the 1930s and 40s—for obvious reasons. The South can remain the South without being static. There will be shifts. Scotland, for example, has certainly retained a sense of being a separate nation from England in spite of close ties. You even have an Archbishop of Canterbury who's a good Scot and Scottish Prime Ministers running the government in London. Even so, the Scots have kept a sense of their own distinctness.

The Southern writer today who is 40 years old cannot talk to his Confederate soldier grandfather, as Faulkner could. The fact that the South must alter doesn't mean that the South will stop being a particular region.

In fact, I don't want the South to endure on a pure cornpone diet just to save ancient glory and pride. I want us to prosper. Yet prosperity brings its own danger. New Orleans, for example, is rapidly ruining itself as a city: one great hotel after another overshadowing the French Quarter. Any city or region which goes pell mell to attract tourists is inviting trouble.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** If the shaping experience of the generation of Faulkner was the War Between the States and Reconstruction, what are the shaping experiences of modern Southern writers? The 1954 *Brown* decision?

**BROOKS:** Even today, the Southern writers that seem to be ablest and best are the ones who still write with knowledge of the country people—white or black—small town, the sense of family and community. Even when they are describing the tragic experiences of families dissolving, communities going to pieces, they *see* it as something tragic. They don't take it simply as the way the world wags.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** That's true. And you know I have never sensed a generation gap in the South. The generation gap was bridged by the grandfather and the grandchild sitting around the campfire on those hunting trips where you never hunt at all, just sit around and eat barbecue and swap yarns.

**BROOKS:** I can see that. All my family were hunters and fishermen of one sort or another. We all had this unifying tradition.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Talk about hunting will be absolutely horrifying to certain literary circles in New York City. They associate the South with the brutality of *Easy Rider*. You and Mr. Warren deplore what you call the "frontier unruliness and violence" in the South. Part of this is associated with deer hunting and so forth. But what would Faulkner, Lytle, Warren and the others have done without the new material that this violence permitted them to use?

**BROOKS:** I think all of the writers you named were brought up in that tradition, and they used it in their work. Some people have

trouble accepting it. I taught a course in British and American literature at Yale. I caught the point fairly early. I would say to my class, you are going to read a great hunting story. How many of you have ever hunted at all? There might be one hand in the class. I'd tell them; you've got to get over the idea that a hunter is a sadist or a brutal man. Otherwise, you won't be able to read one of the finest stories ever written, Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: The stories of violence have their bad parts, but they also indicate a deeper humanity .

BROOKS: I agree. You don't want to kill the hope that we can discipline the violence. We know we will never be able to do it completely, but we certainly don't want to kill the humanity which is alongside of it.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Is there, in the South a corrective to this problem? The persisting tradition of manners in the South; the taxi driver who brought our bags into the hotel instead of leaving them on the curb, as would have happened in other places; the Southerner of all economic classes who says, "Yes sir" and "Yes ma'am" to his parents; the courtliness of husbands toward their wives—all of those things so unfashionable today in other regions. Is this not a control over violence?

BROOKS: Yes. Allen Tate has written extensively on that subject. [Robert Penn] Warren too. If you call somebody an SOB, you'd better smile or make it perfectly plain that this is a joke and not meant. If you mean it there will be hell to pay. So you use the lubricant of good manners, courtesy, "Thank you," "Yes sir," "No sir." You use the civilities because honor, even the poorest man's honor, is pretty tender. If he gets the idea that you are trying to insult him, watch out! You may have a real fight on your hands. This is where good manners are not simply a kind of elegant embroidery on the social scheme because everybody is being prissy. It's a very necessary way to help keep things under control.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Do you realize what you are saying? You are *really* horrifying a lot of people with what you just said.

BROOKS: Yes, sure, I know.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: If I may move on to something else? Can you explain the continuing flight of Southern intellectuals from the South? You spent thirty years up north; Mr. Warren spent many years up north; Tate spent many years away from the South before returning ...

BROOKS: I can answer for myself and make some guesses about a few others. It was a standard joke at Yale that Mississippi was the state lowest on the rung of educational and economic statistics. And yet it is a curious thing that Mississippi is producing more writers and fewer readers of books than any other place in the country. I used to tease my classes by pointing out that we live in this nice well-built, sanitized, high-income state of Connecticut. But name me a native son or daughter of Connecticut who is a writer. Who are they? I couldn't find any. Maybe there is a moral to this.

But, to get back to your question. Very frankly, I left LSU and the South because the *Southern Review* was killed. Both Warren and I left when other schools, which happened to be in the north, gave us offers. Warren went to the University of Minnesota and I went to Yale. I had a very decent friend who was the head of my department. He did all he could with the administration. They jacked-up my salary, they thought a great deal, and it was still \$1500 under my other offer. At the time, due to certain family problems, I needed the money badly. And keep in mind that the spending power of money was much greater 50 years ago than it is today.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: But Mr. Tate spoke so bitterly, or am I misconstruing his words, when he said the South had no place for him?

BROOKS: Well, I know what he means. I would add this: LSU had no place for me. The hierarchy of the university was paying big salaries to the deans in the administration, but they would kill the *Southern Review* at a time when we were being read at Harvard and in London, and they would not raise my salary at least equal to what I could get elsewhere. So, yes, we were very bitter about it. Vanderbilt did the same thing. They refused Allen Tate a modest graduate scholarship, and they fired Warren eventually. They let [John Crowe] Ransom go at the height of his fame.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Is this the prophet in his own land having no honor?

BROOKS: Yes, that's part of it. But now Warren's name is so honored, Ransom's name is so honored, Tate's name is so honored, that anywhere they go in the South, great ovations follow. I had a little part in the Fugitives' reunion of the 50th anniversary of the publication of *I'll Take My Stand*, and the place was packed. Nobody could say too much in favor of them.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What about today? Who are the new voices you respect as artists, and are they able to make it here in the South?

BROOKS: Well, I think that Reynolds Price is a pretty good novelist. He has a good post at Duke. They want him there. He could go elsewhere if he chose, but he prefers to stay in North Carolina. I understand that Barry Hannan, of whose work I hear such good things, got out of teaching because, like many writers, he found the university depressing. But he has chosen to remain in the South. Beth Henley, the young dramatist from Mississippi, has gone to New York, but a playwright has almost got to be on Broadway.

There are quite a number who are now staying. In fact, Allen Tate finally came back to the South at the end of his life and lived at Sewanee. He loved it and is buried there.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: So you feel there is no longer this drain of talent?

BROOKS: No. Some of the college administrations are pretty bad, but nearly every college and university in the South has at least one writer in residence.

There is a book that came out from a couple of people at the University of North Carolina, an anthology of recent Southern poets. There were over 70 of them in it, and the poems are very good. Most of those poets are living in the South right now. So, yes, the times have changed.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Mr. Brooks, on another subject, you have written, with hope, that education and the proper schooling will help to preserve certain values. But I always wonder whether that isn't a forlorn hope.

BROOKS: I think that it is a forlorn hope and I think it's going to continue to be unless we make what is not likely to happen: a radi-

cal change in the whole educational process. We see a few weak gestures that way in the "Back to Basics" program. But I think the teachers' colleges have done infinite damage to the teaching process in this country. This doesn't mean that a great democracy and a relatively wealthy democracy should not provide a good education for everybody who can take it and wants it. I think it should. The truth of the matter is that it hasn't. Granted, there are exceptions: fine teachers in public schools turn out first-rate people. But on the whole, they are not doing a good job, and the fact that the literacy rate of the United States has been falling steadily for ten years tells its own story. By and large, we are not teaching people to read and write.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Don't we now have the illiterate teaching the illiterate?

**BROOKS:** We do. We have at least two generations of poorly educated teachers. In most states, you can't teach in public schools unless you have graduated from a teacher's college. Teacher's colleges have historically emphasized, not content, but method, method, method. So you have people trying to teach mathematics who don't know mathematics, and you have people trying to teach English who can't speak or write English.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** And then there's a related question: what can formal education really accomplish? Can education teach ethics? Can love of the True, the Good, the Beautiful be taught? In a very real sense, isn't every generation condemned to start from scratch?

**BROOKS:** I would take a reverse step. There is a sense in which we all start from scratch. Our childhood period and our basic nature are terribly important to us, for good or ill. However, to an extent, you can train people to have an appreciation of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. You can expose people. Good teaching can expose them to examples and indirectly may give a great deal of instruction. Not by providing formulas for the truth, definitions of the truth, and so on, but by providing models of the pure and the good.

We get into a very touchy point here. Public school education in this country is dedicated, for reasons that we all know, to a pluralistic society. We are told: you can't do this, you can't do that, you are discriminating against this group or the other. The result is, the

public school has been emasculated in a sense. It can no longer teach basic values.

For example, how is religion taught in most universities? It's taught historically and comparatively, which has its own merits. But if you start with an unbeliever, it's likely to end up making him more skeptical and faithless still.

The public school system and even the great private universities have to respond to a pluralistic world. What you can teach in the way of ethics is very, very little. What you can do, and this is not perfect, but hopeful; you can expose them to the great thinkers and the great artists of the world. It is amazing how hungry college students are, the best ones, for this treatment.

Voegelin made one of the most interesting comments along this line that I know. When the great revolt of students occurred in America and Europe during the 1960s, he said, the universities in part had brought it on themselves. Many students thought that they ought to get out of their university life some account of the basic values, something to believe in, something to work for. For various reasons the universities had walked around these things so warily, he said, no wonder young students, uninformed, would blow their tops in this way. They were reacting to the absence of instruction in basic values.

The whole drift of American life is toward the training school, though we like to disguise it under the name of the college or university. It's a place where you go in order to learn how to make a living, learn a skill. Goodness knows, it is an important thing to know how to make a living. But what used to be, and what still ought to be, the real object of humanities is to teach not merely how to make money, but how to spend it; not merely how to acquire the means for living, but to learn the proper ends. A person who has all the means in the world and doesn't know what to live for will probably land on a psychiatrist's couch sooner or later, asking, "What's it all about? What am I building this fortune for? Why?" American education has been falling down on this business of exhibiting models of the great values of life.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Plato says the object of education is to make good men. Aristotle spoke of the necessity of teaching people to use their leisure to better themselves. And we know that self-government depends on civic virtue. If civic virtue isn't taught in our public schools, then we have a situation that militates against a self-governing society...

BROOKS: I agree completely. It's quite true.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Turning again to our region, will the South be able to survive the rising tide of polyesterized, three-piece suited, money-grabbing young men who are ignorant of Southern tradition?

BROOKS: The only good signs I can see are these: I find that in the Southern schools where I have been teaching, the brightest, most interested students respond right away. They are genuinely interested in the tradition dramatized and exemplified in it. They want to learn more about it, they are concerned.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Now, let me get to the question of alienation applied to the Southern community. We have, all over the South in TV stations and on radio programs, either Yankees or Southerners who are ashamed of their native accent. They adopt the "mid-Atlantic" accent, whatever that is. They are doing their best to get rid of what is Southern about their speech. The common denominator of vulgarities, like a black hole in space, just sucks everything down. How do you protect against that?

BROOKS: I don't know. How does one protect civilization? How does one protect man's vision of God? How does one protect the health and vitality of a democratic society? There are no obvious, no easy solutions. It'll take eternal vigilance and a great deal of faith in the capacity of man.

I think there are some specific wrongs that we ought to try to right in education. As I've said, I have very little faith in education as it's taught. It's a shambles in many respects. I've yet to find a student who, if approached with any vigor and interest, wouldn't respond to some extent, some with limited talents and some with great talents that have never been touched.

Eric Voegelin made one of the most important, but also one of the most pessimistic, replies to this sort of question. He said, the great problem of any high civilization is to find enough good teachers, enough born teachers to instruct the new generation. He said very few high civilizations ever have enough.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Then we're in a bad way. We were talking about the lowest common denominator of our students going into education.

BROOKS: That's one reason I'm in favor of the private schools. Do all you can to promote private schools. Provide a voucher system so that parents who care about the children can shop around a little. I know what the *New York Times* says when this is proposed: you will condemn public schools to the worst students; you'll snatch away the better students. I think there is some merit in that. On the other hand, I don't think that people, like the editors of the *New York Times*, see how bad the situation is really in the public schools. I think public schools need some competition. I think that parents who don't know much about education, when they see how much more progress the children next door are making in private school, will either try to get into that school or else raise hell with the public school. Why can't we get more people doing that?

One of the most stimulating things that I've seen was a televised account of an admirable black woman in Chicago who didn't like the way the schools were being run; so she set up her own school. It's in one of the poorer districts, and they apparently have to pay a fee. But she can't take any more students. She has a long waiting list. This is because parents, even those who are uneducated, can see the difference and say, "I want that for my child, too."

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Yes, parochial schools in the city are filled with non-Catholic blacks. But changing the subject, Mr. Brooks, you say, "Indeed, I shall ... argue that poetry needs religion, and that the relationship between religion and poetry is a polar relationship in something of the same sense in which we speak of the poles of an electric battery, one positive and the other negative, poles that mutually attract each other and thus generate a current of energy." Does Robert Penn Warren illustrate your point?

BROOKS: Well, it's amazing to me how many times God comes up in his poems. He is a seeker; he is a yearner. He knows how important it is and has been for a lot of people in the past ages.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: If you don't mind I'd like to quote some passages of yours. You say, categorically at one point, that the death of a civilization comes with the decay of religion. A little later on you say, "If one takes a somewhat longer view and believes, one can establish the community again, a truly human community, but do it without reference to transcendental faith."

BROOKS: As I get older, and I'm not sure wiser, I am more appalled

at the distortions of Christian theology that I find all around me. The people who honestly and so badly misunderstand it, if they could get the scales dropped from their eyes, would say, "My God! I didn't realize."

I've run into people all my life who think that God was wicked, not even as good as a good human being to allow his Son to be treated so badly. I think a better knowledge of the Trinity would make them see that it is God Himself sacrificing Himself. I don't know whether the theologians of my church would accept my view, but I hope they would. Infinite harm has been done in the South by the hot gospelers. But I'll say this much for them, the South is the only region that still has some hold on the supernatural.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You call it God-haunted. But going back to the claims of Incarnation, when a poet writes mustn't he be aware of that claim, even if he personally rejects it?

BROOKS: I think so. I think my friend Warren has a real appreciation for Christianity, even though it's detached and not his own.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Which is why he calls himself a yearner?

BROOKS: Yes. He came out of a God-fearing community, by and large. There were wicked people and good people, but I think that it was God-haunted. I know that he has a number of friends who are devout Christians, and he does not scorn them saying "You of simple faith" or "You of blind faith." I think the claim of art as religion has been powerful in our time and I can see why, even though I don't agree with it. I can see why Joyce gave up his Church. How was he going to fulfill himself in what must have seemed to him a rather alienated, meaningless universe? He made up his own universe through his work. So does Wallace Stevens, who becomes more and more of a philosophical poet. He can tell you volumes about not only himself but about our age, the artists of our age.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: I have one final question. The church is the custodian of the Word. Over the interpretation of very few words, the Church has suffered through the experience of terrible schisms, bloody wars, torture; the Church has become inhuman and cruel, whether in Geneva or in Toledo makes no difference. So the Church knows personally the importance of the written word. Now explain to me how the Church today can be so cavalier about what it is doing

to the Word by its destruction of the euphonics of the language that we were brought up in.

BROOKS: I will simply pound one more mallet head onto the spike you have driven so well. I have spent fifty years trying to teach people the importance of words, getting the right words and putting them together; trying to show how words make drama, plays, novels and poems. The people who are supposed to be guardians of the word sometimes throw all of that away and say, "We can use any old language."

My feeling is that God will accept any earnest prayer, even if it is in a sign language. But I'm not worried about God. I'm worried about us.

I need all the help I can get in my worship, I want the help of a great language which helps articulate what I have difficultly articulating. More than that, it's the thing that goes right back to the Jewish origins of the Church. Our sacrifice ought to be the best we can offer. To offer just cheap, shopworn, everyday language is not good enough when we have something better.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: We find everywhere around us this disrespect for language. In book reviews, nobody pays any attention to the language that the author may have used. They pay great attention to the utilitarian values of the book, either its message or its technical contribution to the craft. There's a general rule of indifference to the word.

BROOKS: Well, I used to tell my English students, sometimes in despair, when I thought they felt that they had no important function: "Look, take yourselves seriously. You occupy a castle at the very top of the pass. Everything has to pass your doors. Even the sociology professor is using words; so control the passes if you can; try your best to. In other words, you have got a very important function, and don't let anybody tell you that you don't." ☆

DAISY CAVE

1988

*Daisy Cave was married to a Confederate soldier and her memories of him are vivid. We can't be sure how many widows of Confederate soldiers are still living. Probably fewer than ten.*

*A native of Barnwell County, South Carolina, Mrs. Cave now resides in the Hopewell Nursing Home in Pinewood, South Carolina. She receives a Confederate Pension of \$3,000 per year which the State Comptroller General often delivers to her personally.*

*At 97, Mrs. Cave has a heart full of memories and a unique perspective on the South. But her favorite subject is her first and only husband, Henry Cave, Confederate Cavalryman. This brief conversation with Managing Editor Oran P. Smith took place at the Hopewell Nursing Home.*

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Do you remember the day Henry Cave proposed?

**MRS. CAVE:** Well, I was an orphan child, living with my uncle. Henry Cave came there to buy horse feed. When he saw me, Mr. Cave said to a friend, "Who is that girl yonder?" And my friend told him that I was Daisy Wilson. Then Mr. Cave said in a voice intended for me to hear, "She's just who I need to keep house for me." And I said: "No, sir, you don't need me." But he said that he was coming back the next day to see if I had made up my mind. I told him that my mind was already made up.

I was working in the field at the time. That's all I knew. Everywhere I'd ever lived there was a farm.

Anyway, the next day, he came back and said: "Have you made up your mind?" and I said, "My mind was made up yesterday." But he kept coming back—three or four times. Finally he said: "It sounds foolish to ask you such a thing, but will you consider *marrying* me?" And I said: "Now, I'm going to have to study over that! It seems like the only way I'll get rid of you is to marry you."

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Then what happened?

**MRS. CAVE:** He said that he was going to get a license. But I knew he couldn't get it without me. So, he came back and said he couldn't get the license. "We'll go up to Barnwell together tomorrow," he

said. When we got up there, Mr. Snelling, the Probate Judge, said: "Uncle Henry, why not just finish it up here?" (Most everybody called him Uncle Henry.) He said, "Well, it suits me if it suits her." And that was fine.

But a whole lot of people had gone to the parsonage to see us get married there, and they waited and waited and waited. After we got married in front of the judge, we went on to Mr. Cave's house, ate dinner, and went out to sit on the porch. After a while, a colored boy rode up on a mule, and said, "Mr. Cave, them peoples at the parsonage wants to know what's holding you up!" And Mr. Cave said, "Not a thing in this world. I done had a good dinner, and I got me a pretty girl." So that's the way we got married.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How old were you when you married him, and how old was he?

MRS. CAVE: I told him I was 21, but I was really 22. He was 75. He had been married before. His first wife died in childbirth. He had four daughters, and every one of them was older than I was. All of them liked me but one. Mr. Cave said that she was the only girl that gave *him* any trouble. He always had to spank her when she was little.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Did Mr. Cave ever talk about the War?

MRS. CAVE: He didn't talk much about it. He said it was heartbreak-  
ing. The Confederacy didn't have much money. They didn't have anything to go on. He would cry when he talked about the War. I would never mention it unless he did.

He was stationed down close to Charleston. To keep from starving, the boys would go out during the daytime and spot different things and go back in the night to get them. One day he went into a potato patch, and there were some watermelons planted in there. He spotted a couple that he thought were ripe, and he went back at night to get them. He put one in one end of his bag and one in the other and put it over his shoulder and went back to camp. He had been sent to get water and he told the men back in camp that he couldn't find the water hole and that they would have to do without water that night. But the commanding officer had heard him talking before he got to the camp, and he said: "Henry, get those watermelons and come over here and let's cut 'em."

One day, they had been out "foraging," as he called it, and a

bunch of geese followed him. Those boys threw down a little bit of corn, and the geese ate it up. He had a fishing line in his pocket with a hook on it, so he put a grain of corn on it and got one of the geese to follow him on down the road.

Another story he used to tell was how one night he went near the marsh and pulled up some dry grass and made him a bed. But the tide came in and woke him up. He had to wade out with the water up to his neck. It was so cold that his clothes froze on him. When he got to the "lookout house," as he called it, they wouldn't let him go to the fire, they said he might die. So they gave him some good blankets to cover up with, and they kept pulling him up a little bit closer toward the fire until his clothes thawed and he could get them off.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Where did he serve besides Charleston?

**MRS. CAVE:** Mr. Cave was transferred to Virginia. They were on a freight train and the boxes were filled with soldiers, and some of the soldiers were up on the top. There was also a guard up there keeping any of them from running away.

One of the boys said: "It may be right, but it's mighty hard. I'm going by my house and I know my folks are going to be watching, and I've got to ride right on by." To that the guard said: "Well, son, if you can stand the jump off the boxcar, you can stand the bullets." And two of them jumped off. One of them went on home, but the other one was killed by the fall.

The Confederates were traveling north to protect the South. They had been down around Charleston, but were needed in Virginia worse.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Did Mr. Cave say anything about the surrender?

**MRS. CAVE:** Mr. Cave's commander said: "Henry, I'm going to have to give up. And I want to surrender with as few boys as I possibly can." He didn't want them locked up and all that. He said that if he and his brother John wanted to, they could go on. He gave them a discharge. His brother had gotten wounded in the war, so Mr. Cave had to carry him on his back and in his arms most of the way home. It took them several days. I think somebody in Barnwell that lived out in the country picked them up and took them to their house.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Did your husband volunteer for the Confederacy?

erate Army, or was he drafted?

MRS. CAVE: He was 17 years old. He wasn't old enough for the draft. He and a bunch of boys were at a bridge near Barnwell one night. A man who knew Henry came by and said: "Henry, what are you doing down here in the swamp this time of night?" And Henry said: "I'm going to join the Army."

The man told him to go on back home. But Henry said: "No, sir, my daddy won't let me go. I got to slip off."

So the man drove to Henry's daddy's house and told him where Henry was. Henry's daddy went and met Henry and said: "Henry, get in here and let's go back to the house. If you're that interested in going in the Army, I'll sign the paper."

The next day his daddy went with him to join the Confederate Army.

Henry was in the cavalry. His horse was shot out from under him. He came mighty near to getting killed. He told me that he could have put in for disability because of a wound he got while running up some stairs to get fodder for the horses. He was cutting up and one of the rails stuck him and left a bad scar. But he knew he had not been injured in combat. So he didn't want to go home and have to tell a story.

He was a good man. I called him "Mr. Cave." And he called me "Baby." And Ben, our son, he called him "the boy." He never called him by his name.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You never called him *Henry*?

MRS. CAVE: No, he was too old!

We went to a reunion in Charlotte, and two pretty girls came and got him. They were going to give a free show to all the Confederate veterans and their wives. He said: "Come on, Baby." And they said: "No sir, this is for the Confederates and their *wives*," and he said: "Well, that's *mine*!" I was so embarrassed I could have gone through a keyhole.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What was your life like as a young girl?

MRS. CAVE: I did everything anybody in the world ever did on a farm. When you lose your mama and daddy you're done for. I don't remember my mother, I was nine years old when Daddy died. He was trying to stop some horses that were running away with a little

boy, and the boy was sitting in the buggy (a surrey, they called it), and Daddy grabbed one of the horses by his bit, and the horses threw him down. The doctor said he didn't know whether it was the horse's shoe or the railroad iron, but my daddy got a concussion and died. We were poor, but he did the best he could for us.

Then I had to stay anywhere I could. I went to an aunt's house. I was doing very well there for a while. She had plenty. She had raised a boy whose mother died. The baby had been laid on the grave of the mother for anyone who wanted it; so my aunt took him and raised him. It was right, I guess, for her to think more of him than she thought of me. I was about twelve years old.

Later I went to my uncle's. I worked in the field just like they did. These old shriveled up hands have done some hard work. I've made about 65 aprons since I've been in here, with just a needle and thread. I ain't got no machine.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You never remarried?

MRS. CAVE: Nope. Well, if you get a good man the first time and he dies, the next one might be too mean. And most everybody drank, and God knows I can't stand it. I never found a man as good as him.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Do you have any advice for the young people today?

MRS. CAVE: I tell what's the fact. I believe the end of time is almost here. I believe it with all of my heart. I read the Bible. If young people have any sense, they would get down on their knees and pray. Some of them don't believe the Bible at all; they say its old-timey. But the Bible says: "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my Words will never pass."

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: As a widow of a Confederate soldier, what do you think of the people on the other side? What do you think about Yankees?

MRS. CAVE: Yankees? I heard a lady with the United Daughters of the Confederacy say one time: "They must like it down here pretty good; when they come down here you can't run them back North." Some people call them damnyankees.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What do you think about the Confederate

flag on the top of the South Carolina Statehouse? Do you think it ought to stay?

MRS. CAVE: I think it should fly. I've got *two* at my house. Anybody who knew Henry Cave would have to believe in that flag. He was a good man. ☆

JAMES DICKEY

1986

*James Dickey is probably the South's best-known literary figure, if only because he wrote the novel *Deliverance*, translated it into an acclaimed screenplay, and then appeared in the film himself as the mammoth (and highly credible) rural sheriff. Yet Dickey's worldwide reputation is not based primarily on his fiction or films. He is essentially a poet whose works are recognized by the best critics as among the most important of the twentieth century.*

*Part of Dickey's skill and power as a poet can be explained in terms of his background. He is a native Georgian who spent much of his youth traveling with his father in the hill country, where he learned the way of people who still conducted themselves according to older codes and used a purer strain of English than he heard in Atlanta, a language not as yet corrupted by modern urbanization or technology. Thus Dickey's poetry has the sound of the human voice in it, a voice that never quite loses its idiomatic diction and syntax.*

*He was educated first at Clemson University, where he was a star halfback, and then at Vanderbilt, where he was exposed to the literary influence of the Fugitive-Agrarians, most of whom he came to know personally in later years. At Vanderbilt he also gained a broader vision of English and American literature, both at the undergraduate and at the graduate levels, and then moved on to serve an apprenticeship under Andrew Lytle at the University of Florida.*

*After teaching in a number of colleges and universities throughout the country, Dickey finally chose to return to his native region, to the University of South Carolina, where he is currently Carolina Professor of English and Poet-in-Residence.*

*A Guggenheim Fellow for 1962-63, Dickey won the National Book Award for Poetry and the Melville Cane Award, both given for Buckdancer's Choice, an early collection of poems. His first novel, *Deliverance*, won the Prix Medicis in France (1971), and Dickey himself wrote the script for the movie, which is now regarded as a modern film classic.*

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** A few years ago you were interviewed by Bill Moyers, and he asked you a question he didn't quite let you finish. So we'd like to start out by asking you that same question again. You've made a conscious choice to come back to the South. You could have taught in the cultural Northeast...

DICKEY: I did. I've taught in a lot of different places, I've taught in California. I've taught in Oregon. I've taught in Wisconsin. All over.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: But you chose to come back here to this region. So why do you like it here?

DICKEY: Well, because I'm a born Southerner. Many of my relatives are from here. My father's people were from the mountains. My mother's father came from Perry, which is down in central Georgia, but my father's people are from Appalachia. And given a choice, I felt I would be more comfortable among people whose ways I understood. Besides that, the remnants of my family were here. When I moved back South, my mother and father were still alive, and my brother and sister still live north of Atlanta. I wanted to be in closer proximity than I had been when I lived in Oregon or California and before that in Italy. I didn't have a chance to see very much of them, and I'm very fond of them. Family, I think, means something a little more to Southerners than it does to other people. We have more of a European attitude.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Yes, and a lot of your poetry is about family. Your poem "The Celebration," for example.

DICKEY: That one really works. It's quite believable. I mean there aren't any literaryisms in it. That's something very few poets can say of anything they've written.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: For the benefit of our readers, it's a story about a son who comes to a fair or carnival and sees his parents, not expecting to see them there...

DICKEY: That'd be the last place I'd ever expect to see mine.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: And then, all of a sudden...

DICKEY: ...He takes to following them around to see what they'll do. And they do these things that he would have never suspected. The father wins a teddy bear knocking over those heavy milk bottles, for example.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: We have the girls and the fire-eater and the carnival music. All of a sudden the scene coalesces to produce a kind

of insight into his parents...the vitality of their life, their sexuality.

DICKEY: Yes. They get on the Ferris wheel and he sees them going around...their gold teeth flashing...and it ends something like this: "Believers, I have seen the wheel in the middle of the air where old age rises and laughs, and on Lakewood Midway became in five strides a kind of loving, a mortal, a dutiful son."

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: There's no better poem in the English language on that subject.

DICKEY: My goodness! There are a lot of poets, and they all had parents, so that's taking in a lot of territory. I'm glad you like it. It was based on an actual incident. Although it wasn't exactly like that, it was enough like it to make it something that speaks to me and my family and I hope it would say something to other people.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Besides this sense of family, are there other advantages that you bring to your writing as a Southerner?

DICKEY: I think so. This may be an illusion, but I believe there is at least a remnant of a code, a code of belief or morality in the South...

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: A sense of piety?

DICKEY: Not exactly that. I don't know what the connection with religion would be, but I believe there probably is one. But whenever I knew a Southerner in the army (I was in twice), I always assumed he would do what he said he'd do. You know, there wasn't anybody from the South who tried to beg off from doing anything.

Of course, there are a lot of sorry people in the South. The jails are full of them. And they're sorry in a particular sort of way. I try to keep away from that kind of Southerner when I want somebody to do something. But the other kind were very upright, and they seem to have a sort of pride about being reliable and doing what they said they were going to do.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You know, it's interesting that if you go up to New England and observe the contrast in law...a verbal contract is not enforceable up there, but in Southern states it is a matter of legal tradition that if a man gives his word it's a binding agreement.

DICKEY: When I see a crooked Southerner, say a politician (you see, Southern politics has a long and unfortunate history of them and this may contradict a good deal of what I'm about to say) but whenever I see somebody who sells out the people who've elected him—when I see that happen and it's so obviously a case of deliberate financial malfeasance or self-aggrandizement, I always feel betrayed. You know, you expect this to happen somewhere else...undoubtedly it's a sentimental Southerner's point of view, but you do feel it too, don't you?

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Sure. On the other hand, there are people in the wards of Chicago who think it just comes with the territory. I don't think we feel that here.

DICKEY: Not quite as much. We have a sense of rage that they don't. This is evidence of a kind of morality we still have. Maybe it will fade out, but we still do have that you know. We have a sense of outrage and a sense of betrayal when one of our own people does something that we know (and we know *he* knows) is wrong. Don't you feel this?

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Yes. And you even see it in a few films about the region. For example, *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.

DICKEY: I liked that movie very much, and one of the reasons I liked it is that the chief villain from *Deliverance* was the chief villain in that. He's a Memphis fellow named Billy McKinney. He played the guy on the river bank in *Deliverance* who does the sexual assault on Bobby and is the first one to get shot. But he also played the Kansas Redleg guy who was trying to get Josey Wales any possible way he could.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: In the film, he was told he should fear Josey Wales because Wales was a man who lived by the code.

DICKEY: I like it...Billy McKinney is a wonderful Southern type villain. You were talking about the kind of criminals. His character is completely amoral. I mean he doesn't have any shades of morality, or anything good about him at all. And yet he's not an animal exactly. I mean he's got a kind of *particular* depravity. In *Deliverance* we wanted somebody who could project that quality, someone in whom there's no saving grace, but who at the same time has that

Southern twist. Have you ever seen anybody you wanted to see get shot in the back with an arrow as much as that guy? "You see you done taken a wrong turn somewhere. See, this here river don't go nowhere near Aintry." (laughter). How'd you like to fall into the hands of somebody like that who's got a shotgun aimed at you?

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: All of us who have broken down on back roads are always scared he'll walk up to the car. Speaking of *Deliverance*, you said at one point that you really began looking at one kind of hero and ended up discovering another kind—a more civilized, communal hero.

DICKEY: And also a more resourceful one. The trouble with Lewis is that he's too rigid in his codes. He's not adaptable. He's not flexible. On the other had, in the end the narrator, Ed Gentry, discovers a good many qualities in himself that he's never understood to be there, and he utilizes them just on this one occasion. But that's enough. He knows he's got them. He can go ahead and build his life on that knowledge. He knows that what he had to do he did—and he was up to it. Lewis had some bad luck breaking his leg. But I wanted to give the readers and viewers a feeling that Lewis would not have been able to figure out the situations as well. He might have wanted to confront the guy, you know, and prove himself superior in some way, instead of bushwacking him.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Speaking of bushwacking and the code, another poem that I think is marvelous in several ways is "Cherrylog Road."

DICKEY: That's a funny one.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You talk about what would now be called a sexual encounter between two Southern kids. And it takes place in the middle of a junk yard...in the back seat of an old Pierce-Arrow.

DICKEY: What that ol' grandmotherly car was doing in the midst of wrecked stock cars, bootleggers' cars, has never been known to me. But I put it there because I thought it'd be good.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: It has the pane between the chauffeur's seat and the rider's seat...

DICKEY: "Not all the way broken out."

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: "Not all the way broken out" and I always saw that as kind of image of the society we're looking at there...where the pane is not all the way broken out.

DICKEY: I wouldn't insist too much on any symbolical reading. If someone else wanted to find that in there, I'd be delighted.

I remember I once wrote a poem about two terribly sunburned lovers who can't keep their hands off each other, but at the same time they're so sunburned they can't touch each other. The sun goes down, they develop this terrible pain in their bodies, and they go into the house and are warily moving toward each other and they don't exactly know what to do...they can't and they "can't not" get together. And somewhere some student told me, "Dickey, this is really a monumental situation. It is the first time you come right out and show the true influence of Dante." I said, "Yes, baby, how did you know?" It never occurred to me that it was like Paolo and Francesca in Dante, but now that it's pointed out, I think everybody should see it. I must be the last to know!

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Well, I was only thinking that the Pierce-Arrow was a vestige of a more formal time, when strict codes were still in force.

DICKEY: Yes, that's true and you know, manners are characteristically Southern. And when you talk about manners, in the old days almost everybody had manners, even people from poor families. There were things you did and things you didn't do. I remember I was interviewed when I was at the Library of Congress by two people. One of them was a Northern woman and the other was the editor of *Shenandoah* magazine, Jim Boatwright. (As a matter of fact, he's still the editor.) Well, after Boatwright left, I sat there and had a drink with the lady whose tape machine we were using. And she said, "You know I couldn't believe that editor from *Shenandoah*. That boy has the most beautiful manners. I don't really know how to respond to that, but believe me I noticed it. At first it seemed like a put-on to somebody like me, from the Pacific Northwest, but it's not. And believe me, Jim, the ladies like it."

I think about Southern women marrying Northern men and Northern men marrying Southern women. It's almost like that old saying about European men marrying American women. You can

say that Northern men make Northern women the best wives for Southern men. Something like that. Does that sound right?

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: And it's more than a conventional respect. It has a metaphysical dimension to it...

DICKEY: And also a religious one...It's essentially Christian as such. It's a doctrine of forbearance and of "love thy neighbor and be considerate of him." All of Christianity—the best part, not the ritualistic part or the structure of hierarchy of the church—can be found in a few simple things Jesus asserted: that people should be kind to one another, you know. That's really all there is to it. It is the only religion to my knowledge that ever had that as a central doctrine...it's essentially a matter of conduct, how you act. Not so much how you worship or what you believe, although all that comes into it in various ways. But it basically has to do with how you act.

And this is the real relationship between religion and the Southern code—all the things Mr. Faulkner used to talk about: honor, and duty and mercy and regard for others. It's essentially a Christian base.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What does it mean, then, when we lose our manners?

DICKEY: It means it's bad news, it seems to me. The industrialization—and so much of the South's economy is coming to depend on that more and more—the industrialization and the urbanization of this part of the country have the effect of homogenizing things so that the Southernisms die out, at first slowly, and then rapidly. The generation after mine is not like my generation, and mine is not anything like my father's, to say nothing of my grandfather's generation. Incidentally, I could tell you something that would interest you in connection with my Southern heritage. You are looking at one of the few people still on earth whose grandfather was in the War Between the States. I don't mean my great-grandfather, or my great-great-grandfather, I mean my grandfather fought in the War. He fought with General John B. Gordon. I hear John B. Gordon's name all over the place—there's a John B. Gordon highway that runs from Atlanta all the way down to Jonesboro, Scarlett O'Hara's old stomping grounds, but I could never find out what John B. Gordon did.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Let me ask you this in connection with that:

You have a poem that grows right out of that experience called "Hunting Civil War Relics at Nimblewill Creek." I wonder if it ever occurred to you that that poem was a kind of repudiation of Tate's assertion that no Ode to the Confederate Dead could be written...

DICKEY: Not even by him.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: That somehow or other we are incapable as modern men of having any empathy with those dead.

DICKEY: Yeah, I like that poem "Nimblewill," I built it around that name. It's such a wonderful place name. Actually it's a little place called "Nimblewill Church" and the last incident I described there didn't happen. If you're a poet and you get something as attractive as a place name and it's as euphonious and unusual and as Southern as that one, then you've got to work it in. And I liked it so much that I used it as a refrain. But I do have a brother who is probably the ranking collector of War artifacts, that is, a field collector. I mean he's a consultant to West Point, Annapolis...everywhere. And he is besieged by other people who have the same sort of fanatical impulse to dig up the stuff.

My son, my oldest boy, who started out as a filmmaker, made quite a good film about my brother Tom's relic hunting. He said he went out with Tom on a trip down someplace or other around Savannah. Well, my brother is the least poetic of any of us, but he knows the strategy and battles and munitions and weaponry so well that he knew which battery was placed where and what time and where the shells would have come down, given that equipment, so he's quite successful at it. And he and my son looked out over the suburban pinewoods in somebody's back lot, and he turned to my son and said, "You know, Chris, all the mayhem that went on, all the people killed. You see that field. It's nothing but pine straw, but an engagement in the War is still there. All you have to do is go get it."

My son said he knew he had a heck of a title then and decided to call it "War Under the Pine straw." And it's good, I wish I had time to show it to you. It won Grand Prize for Documentary in the Atlanta Film Festival.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: About Atlanta...from your days in Buckhead till now, a good amount has obviously changed.

DICKEY: Oh, I can't even find the house I grew up in anymore. I

can't find anything. I did speak a few months ago to my old high school and although it does have some additions to it, it is hearteningly similar to the way it used to be. If I were to drive up there and get out where I used to get out and go to homeroom today, I would feel that I had been in a time machine. It would have taken me back to 1937. It's exactly the same. At least superficially...and maybe it seems the same more than it really is because everything else has changed so radically. Everything. I can't find anything, not even my old neighborhood. Everything's been torn down...

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: And they have another Buckhead sixty miles down the road.

DICKEY: They do?

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You go sixty miles down the Interstate and see another exit for Buckhead.

DICKEY: I believe I've seen that. Just can't trust nobody. Not even in the South.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: We have to talk about Vanderbilt and Davidson...

DICKEY: Yes, he was a remarkable man. I really didn't know him that well.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You talk like an Agrarian.

DICKEY: I knew all of them to varying degrees. I was Andrew Lytle's assistant at the University of Florida. I was one of his associate editors on *The Sewanee Review* for several years. So I knew him, probably better than the others. I knew Allen Tate, I met John Ransom only on one occasion.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You were talking about urbanization and industrialization...

DICKEY: If you do like your roots in the South enough to move back here when you have an option, if you like certain characteristics about it, then the forces that are destroying the characteristics that you like are the things you're going to be against.

I suppose in a way I feel this way because of my father's interest in the country and the old people back up in the hills. I spent most of my childhood with him. My mother was an invalid. My father's main interest in life was in gamecocks and chicken fights. I spent a lot of time going around with him in North Georgia. I got used to the way country people saw things and the way they acted. They always seemed very kindly people to me and anxious to do stuff for you, don't you feel?

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Oh, yes. But it's not lost. I flew out of New York the day before yesterday and saw this wasteland below. It looked like a bombed-out city. It doesn't look like that down here, even around Atlanta.

**DICKEY:** Well, you go up to North Georgia, to places like Helen, Georgia. They've turned it into a pseudo-Swiss resort. It is going to be the New Gatlinburg. Isn't it awful?

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Gatlinburg used to be a real mountain community where you could hear authentic fiddle playing ...

**DICKEY:** Yes, I'm a great mountain folk music fan. I can tell you the guy who's holding the line on that. He's an authentic Southern musician, a singer who has got every intonation of country voice and great skill in his instrument. When he goes, we're not going to have anything left but his records. I'm talking about Doc Watson. Doc Watson can flat pick like it ought to be done. It's a wonderful music.

You speak about the arts down here. There are two great types of music that the New World gave to the rest of the world. You've got the Blues on one side. Jazz, the black music. And then you've got the Southern Appalachian strain that comes out of the Scotch-Irish people up there in those hills, from which comes what we call "Country and Western" and the Nashville sound. Everybody in the world loves it. It's just super. That's my music, boy. I tell you, I am quite sure I would not like it as much if it did not express to me something about where I came from and the people who are kin to me.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Do you think developers will destroy our music along with our trees?

**DICKEY:** The ski resorts! They drive me crazy. Because you have to have mountains to have those things—real snow or artificial snow.

They're cutting those huge swaths of virgin timber. It's terrible.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Let me ask you this: Obviously, *Deliverance* was a movie set in the South and more and more movies are being made about the South. Do you really think the movie makers and television series makers are being fair to the region?

DICKEY: Being fair? It's difficult to say. I probably don't see as many movies as you do, although I've made a couple or three. I know that the director of *Norma Rae* also made the first of Pat Conroy's movies. And *Norma Rae* is rather hard on the racial bias of Southerners.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Aren't they just giving the country reprises of all those old days we've put behind us?

DICKEY: Well, the idea of the Southerner, any Southerner, as a racial bigot is very difficult to lay to rest, because there has been a lot of that down here as the result of social and economic forces and the flow of history that nobody could help. Donald Davidson used to be very good on this, saying the climate itself encouraged the importation of chattel slavery. So we were sort of trapped by the situations and a bloody war was fought. Nobody is going to hold any brief for slavery, not now, and Southerners didn't then, either.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: But still we see the South portrayed as culturally deprived.

DICKEY: That's the sort of thing H. L. Mencken used to talk about in his famous essay where he characterized the South as the "Sahara of the Bozart." They can't say that now. We've got the best writers in the country.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: That's right. We've got fifty years of them. And all this literature has to have grown out of something that was essentially Southern. Let me ask you this: As you know, some people say the Southern Literary Renaissance came to an end with World War II. Do you believe that?

DICKEY: No, no.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Do you think there's a community of letters

still here that encourages young writers?

DICKEY: I think so. I don't know of any movements or groups like the Fugitive-Agrarians, though. But there are plenty of good writers.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: As poets they never thought of themselves as constituting a movement. They were just a bunch of people who got together.

DICKEY: You take a writer like Faulkner, I was just down in Oxford, his hometown, last week. The defeat of the South and the change in the social order provided Faulkner with a great tragic theme, with many, many ramifications, because he and his people had lived it. A person could spend his whole life, as Faulkner did, exploring or exploiting that tragedy.

If the South had won, there would not be as rich a source of material, because the essential human predicament is tragedy. It's tragic. That's why tragedy itself is a greater genre than comedy, because the fact that we die makes life tragic. And this is why the most powerful literature is tragic. Some of the most amusing, some of the most thought-provoking literature is comic, but the tragic is the greatest literature. Shakespeare's tragedies are far more powerful and have far more profundity than the comedies because he had the talent that could exploit the great theme. The same with Faulkner.

Take a writer who's essentially a comic writer, like Walker Percy. He is a wonderful writer. He's much more talented a writer *qua* writer than Faulkner. Yet his work has not nor will it ever have the resonance of Faulkner, because Faulkner's theme is so much greater. It's rooted much more deeply in the human psyche than anything Walker Percy would be doing.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: If another talent like Faulkner came along, could current society provide the same resonance?

DICKEY: I think it could. Maybe not exactly the same. Social change goes on. For the thinking novelist, social change, which is what Faulkner wrote about, is still here. I don't know if we'd have the tragic dimension of Faulkner's best work, but it's possible we might.

Did you see *The Doll Maker* on TV, for example? The best thing I ever saw Jane Fonda do. A Southern woman goes with her husband

to Detroit and she tries to preserve a Southern way of life, practicing the rural Appalachian doll making. Very powerful. The contrast is a good one. The contrast between the previous South of even fifty years ago, and now.

A lot can be done with that. It won't be done by me because I don't have the interest in working out people's lives. I admire those people but that's not the kind of thing I write.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** A final question on poetry. The work of the Fugitives depended heavily on irony and pedantic diction. So in some ways, contemporary poetry is better because there's a greater versatility of language ...

**DICKEY:** I think so. There is not really a world-class poet among the Fugitives. The best was John Crowe Ransom. But he is so specialized. A taste for his poetry is like a taste for hollandaise sauce. It's an acquired taste. Robert Penn Warren is one of my closest friends. He's a very fine poet indeed. Uneven and ragged but at his best he touches a height that none of the others do, because he has the tragic dimension. Therefore, with his energy and his strange countryman's kind of integrity, it produces a poetry that's above anything the others did.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Any words of wisdom or advice for aspiring Southern writers?

**DICKEY:** Well, not just for Southern writers. I would say look into your own life for the things that seem to you to have the most significance, whether there's a reason for that significance or not. A very easy way to do this is to grab hold of the thing that keeps coming back into your mind without there being any reason for it. Take hold of that, more or less consciously and commit yourself to the subject wholeheartedly—one hundred percent. See where it takes you and just start writing about it. ☆

*J. Evetts Haley is the single most prolific and respected historian of the Southwestern range. H. E. Bolten described Haley very simply as "America's finest historical writer." Haley's 1948 biography, Jeff Milton: A Good Man with a Gun, was hailed by the New York Times as "a glorious contribution to Americana"; his 1952 Fort Concho and the Texas Frontier was recognized by the Sons of the Texas Republic as "the year's finest work in Texas history"; and his first book, The XIT Ranch of Texas and the Early Days of the Llano Estacado (1929), is a classic, still in print, widely recognized as a standard of Western range history. After 23 books and hundreds of articles J. Evetts Haley is still writing and editing.*

*Outside his region, Mr. Haley is best known for his political conservatism and fearlessness. In 1964 he published the historic best-seller A Texan Looks at Lyndon: A Study in Illegitimate Power (over five million copies were sold). The book was a shocker, caught in a whirlwind of controversy. Everywhere in the Liberal Establishment there was crying and gnashing and baring of teeth. But Mr. Haley had impaled his subject on the sword of truth, even if it took the world a few years to make the necessary concessions.*

*For years, Evetts Haley has been a major force in both Texas and national politics, beginning in the 1930's when he campaigned vigorously against the New Deal, as Texas chairman of the National Jeffersonian Democrats. He himself ran for governor of Texas in 1956 and he has been a tireless supporter of many candidates.*

*In the course of this conversation, Mr. Haley makes reference to two men whose names may not be familiar to some of our readers, E. C. Barker and Charles Goodnight. Barker, a professor of History, was a legend on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin for over fifty years. Mr. Haley was his student and protege. In addition to Haley, Professor Barker was associated with or had a profound influence on such eminent men as Forrest McDonald, William E. Dodd, H. E. Bolten, Charles Ramsdell and Walter Prescott Webb.*

*The other man Mr. Haley refers to, Charles Goodnight, was the subject of one of Haley's finest works, Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman (1936). M. E. Bradford has called Haley's work a "central document in the history of the Southwest."*

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: As you look back, how would you describe the changes in the political character of this country, of or this section of the country, over the course of your lifetime?

HALEY: I would say in the country as a whole, that the most drastic, most striking and truly radical change, to my mind, has been the shift in our political character from a representative republic—a constitutional republic—toward a direct democracy, with the consequent decay of constitutionalism—if in fact it hasn't destroyed the Constitution as effectively as a revolution.

Now, as to this particular section, we have always prided ourselves on the fact that ours has been one of the most individualistic areas, clinging to the challenge and the standards of independent action and responsibility. There's been a great change in that, too. In my opinion, that has come about mainly through the operation of federal subsidies and control. This has deteriorated the independence in the character of our people.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Do you agree with those who say that the best way for contemporary conservatives to make an immediate impact on the regime is to have judicial or executive or legislative questions submitted to the population at large in a plebiscite or a popular vote?

HALEY: No. That comes back to what I was just saying about direct democracy. I'm at odds with a lot of my friends, close friends, on that. I do not believe in the referendum and the "recall" and the "initiative," because those ideas are in conflict with the basic purpose of the Constitution, which was to establish a representative form of government. These strategies destroy the deliberative nature of government, or the role intended for deliberation. The important issues of the day should be deliberated and debated carefully in a legislative assembly. These attempts to bring to bear the direct pressure of the people overlook the fact that the "people" may be under the influence of great emotion or excitement or depression. After all, what are those who are running the referenda campaign going to be trying to stir up?

Of course, now, what I would say too, is that, with the type of legislatures we have, with the pressure of all the special interests working against the legislative principle of honest deliberation, there's something to be said, perhaps, for the advocates for direct initiative. The people, in other words, as a whole, are more conservative about

the great issues than their leadership. But that still does not get away from the fact that this is supposed to be a representative republic where the people choose able men to represent them in the legislative process and debate and pass upon these issues. This is what we are supposed to be, and must be, or we are nothing!

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: And, besides, the direct appeal to the people as a whole, on specific issues, might not bring out their generally conservative character at all.

HALEY: No, certainly not! And another thing, the thing that makes it even riskier today is the terrific impact, the revolutionary impact of the electronic media. If the President is shot, or a Justice or a car-load of legislators—everybody sees it tonight "on the spot." This atmosphere doesn't promote good judgment. Everybody is excited. Everybody is experiencing. Now, of course, in the old days—to continue the illustration—it took time for such news to get around. Eventually, it was printed in the local papers. Meanwhile, it took time for the response to be formulated, a week or a month, time for things to get sifted. There was time for the passions to cool, for the people to be more deliberative. But now the news is instantaneous. The public reaction is instantaneous, and potentially just as confused as it is instantaneous. It's a very dangerous thing. It may seem easy to manipulate in the short term, but in fact it's unpredictable.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Your point is that deliberation is what is needed, not referenda.

HALEY: That's right. Well, I'm reminded of the great French psychologist LeBon—I often go back and reread him—who wrote, around the turn of the century, *The Psychology of Crowds*. You see, the emotion of a crowd, the contagion just sweeps groups, small groups and great groups, in any direction, leaving individuals unaffected. I'm going to give an illustration of that: As you know I've been very much interested in federal policies that touched on agriculture, naturally, since it affected my country and it affected my business. Now, the average person in Texas, or anywhere else in this country, is not going to go out individually and steal. He is not going to go steal or take away from somebody unjustly. But in a crowd, the interest of the crowd can be transfigured into an emotional impulse and they soon begin to contend for the legislation (like some of the farmers' groups) that will take from you as a consumer

by the force of law, to put into their pockets as a "bonus" or a "subsidy." In my thinking, this is dishonest. They will steal from you by majority vote, but they won't steal from you individually. And they've been so conditioned that they think this is all right, that this is legitimate and just!

But we, the people, must be guided by basic moral principles in our reaction to public affairs. We cannot just "react" out of interest or passion. So I think that one of our basic problems is that we are not guided by basic moral principles in our reaction. To continue the illustration; you wouldn't steal; this man wouldn't steal, my farmer and rancher neighbors wouldn't steal, but we have neighbors all over the Panhandle, or have had, who would think that they would be ruined if they didn't have a wheat subsidy coming in from somebody's tax money, or a cotton subsidy. They call this "entitlement," but that's just a euphemism for confiscation! The implication is that you are "entitled"—that the average person deserves and is entitled—to take from me what he wants for medical or school expense. This perverts personal moral principle as well as perverting the country, politically. Our reaction to public affairs must be principled if we're to be independent! I firmly believe this. Someone asks, "Well, what are our principles?" I say, the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not steal"; "Thou shalt not covet"; "Thou shalt not bear false witness"; and so on. People have gotten weaned away from an individual, personal reaction of this kind to public affairs, which is what the country really needs.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: A moment ago you mentioned LeBon's *Psychology of Crowds*. What are the works that have been most important to you?

HALEY: The books that have meant the most to me—my favorite works—would be those of Shakespeare, by far: primarily his historical tragedies. Of course, I admire Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, but that doesn't have nearly the influence on me that Shakespeare does. As I dip into Shakespeare, I am continually amazed that one man, one mind could encompass so much in the field of knowledge: medicine, astronomy, astrology, history—so much in the ways of the human heart; and I have not even mentioned his unsurpassed mastery of English. I like Milton, and the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe, but Shakespeare has been my favorite, and is.

I should also mention the works of one of the greatest men and greatest historians I've known, my old master at the University of

Texas, Dr. E. C. Barker, by far the premier figure of his time in the field of Texas history. He was perhaps the most modest man I've every known, but with a tremendously strong character and a profound mind. He had none of the usual superficial trappings that you see so much of among "successful" academics. In that respect he was like Charles Goodnight, and I have never ceased to marvel at the man's character—and at the courage that both of them had.

Then in the overall field of the moderns, Ferrero, probably, with his history of the Roman Empire and the Italian people. Then Ortega, especially the *Revolt of the Masses*, and perhaps Spengler. I admire much of Spengler's *The Hour of Decision*: a fine work. Most American and most modern readers think they can't stand him, because he was so somber in his view! As I see it, he was just telling the truth about what we are all up against.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Which of your own books is dearest to you?

HALEY: It's hard for an author to say, but the book on Goodnight is certainly one of them. I had such a tremendous subject—theme, for one thing, and of course, he was of so much importance in defining the country and in the history of the cattle industry. And, again, because of the profundity of the man himself, the depth of his wisdom and his experience. He possessed an articulate imaginative genius and firm, vigorous character, an impeccable character.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Goodnight and Barker are such different types: A lifelong man of action and a lifelong professor, each representing the two parts of you—ranching and history. How did you arrive at that?

HALEY: By just living and reading. Now, I remember one day—I was a barefoot-kid at home, almost three-quarters of a century ago, and Papa came home with Will Drannan's *Thirty-One Years on the Plains and in the Mountains*, which I took and read. It was the first book that I read by myself. It was an out-and-out specious account—allegedly of his own boyhood and his early life. He claimed that he was adopted by Kit Carson and went on with the narrative of their experiences on the plains, hunting big game, and in the mountains, fighting Indians. It stirred my imagination. It whetted it. This was the first book I had ever read that made reference to the West, to the land I had under my own feet, and it stirred my imagination. It just fascinated me. Well, the very fact that it stirred the imagina-

tion of a young reader and made him eager to get more—to want to know more—had a very beneficial effect. It drew me on. Then, years and years later, research brought out the fact that it was a complete fraud, historically. But it was all good and healthy fiction: "historical fiction."

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: So that led you to an enhanced respect for the land and the people or their way of life?

HALEY: Yes—well, it led me to an enhanced respect for books, you see, what they have, or can have. I've been with books ever since. It was the fiction that first caught and guided my imagination. Nothing we have is so lasting as the pure, written word. The fraudulent parts will always be found out; the inaccuracies will fall away in time. So the best thing is a good, honest book.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: I suppose these aspects are summed up in your politics, especially in *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*. What is your own assessment of that book?

HALEY: I think it's just as solid now as the day it was published. It will stand. It's history. There is not a single statement in it that was ever challenged by Lyndon or his idolatrous associates. Of course, a lot of it is sketchy, in a way. I don't, as Robert Caro does in his new book, go into any details of all of Lyndon's life. I could have filled it up with interviews and quotations from various sources going back. But I didn't go into the sordid features of Lyndon's life because they were not directly pertinent to my purpose. I wasn't trying to tell his life story or to prove that he was some sort of degenerate. I was taking his own record, his public record as it was publicly available, and I put it together, laid it on the line for anyone who was interested, for the concerned public. The press and Lyndon's associates everywhere just absolutely fell all over themselves jumping on me as a terrible, reactionary character! Finally, Ted Lewis, a prominent national columnist, wrote in one of his columns: If the charges in Haley's book aren't true "why doesn't someone sue...Haley is being cut down...why doesn't someone just say the book isn't true." They never did.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What about the confession of Luis Sals, the old election judge from Jim Wells County?

HALEY: Well, of course, so that he could at least die with a clean conscience he finally confirmed that I had been right all along about the Senatorial runoff election in 1948, which Lyndon won by the "landslide" total of 87 votes, statewide. He admitted that Lyndon stole the election and that he had doctored more than 900 ballots in Box 13 himself! He invented and certified more than 200 himself! So, I have the enviable distinction of being confirmed as an accurate and honest historian by a known and confessed thief.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Looking back, now, over your own life, over the struggles and ironies of your lifetime, what would you change or do differently?

HALEY: I've lost some battles I would like to have won—and should have won! But the challenges have been there, you can't change that. The challenges are always there! And my response has been principled and honest, as I've seen it. I've always done my honest best; the best I could do at the time. Actually, I wouldn't change any of it, in that respect. I might have been a little softer at times, in my independent political and intellectual career, to have made it easier on others. But the principles remain the same—because the challenges certainly do.

I remember my conversation with Ortega—the part about why so many of the early Spanish conquistadors came from the same province in Spain. I had noticed this fact, and I questioned him about it in the course of our talking. He answered me at once that it was because they had struggled and steeled themselves for generations there against the domination and influence of the Moors. Well, you see, they were fortified and determined. They were vigilant when they had to be. The analogy is just as good now for us, except that the Moors for us are now within. We come back to the fact that we must fortify ourselves by the honest principles of a free society. These—as well as the ambitions, basic motives, patterns of conduct and passions of men—remain essentially the same: they do not change. "Man changes little, and the lust for power not at all." We will stand or fall by our own character, by what we make of these challenges. If we want freedom, we are going to have to adjust ourselves to the immutable dictates: we cannot defy them. We must appeal to character in others, but we must demand it from ourselves. ☆

JESSE HELMS

1984

*Jesse Helms grew up in a town called Monroe, a rural North Carolina community. He attended college at Wingate Junior College and Wake Forest before joining the Navy in 1942. After a tour of duty he came home in 1945 to accept the city editorship of the Raleigh Times. By 1972, when he left his career in journalism to run for the Senate, Helms was Executive Vice President and Vice Chairman of the Board for The Capitol Broadcasting Company of Raleigh. In that capacity, his editorial comments on current events were carried on television, radio (over 70 stations in North Carolina) and in over 200 newspapers throughout the country.*

*The Senator supports his President on most issues, especially on strong defense and tax cuts to stimulate the economy. "It's working," he says about the effect of the tax cuts. We're on a roll with the economy moving along nicely, he feels. He emphasizes the high 21-plus percent interest rate and the 13 percent annual inflation rate of the Carter Administration, inherited by President Reagan when he took office. The interest and inflation rates have been cut in half, he points out by way of illustration. "This president is doing a good job, and I'm proud to say I was an early supporter of the former California Governor when he announced his intention to seek the Republican nomination for President."*

*When discussing how government should run he says, simply: "Socialism won't work. It's been proven time and time again. There is just no such thing as a free lunch."*

*"America has been drifting into a socialistic form of government and until Ronald Reagan came along there didn't seem to be any way to head it off," he explains. "He's our last hope."*

*If you want to know where Jesse Helms will be when it comes time to count votes on controversial issues in the United States Senate, it doesn't take long to figure it out. The blunt-speaking Senator says about U.S. Senators who hesitate to take stands on controversial issues: "The only things you ever find in the middle of the road are a yellow line and dead skunks."*

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Do you think the press is fair to you in particular, and to conservatives and Republicans in general?

HELMS: That may very well be, as the saying goes, in the eye of the beholder. But I think there can be no question about the hostility of the major media of this country toward the conservative free enterprise principles and priorities which I have tried to uphold.

I don't mind the personal attacks on me, but I do mind the manner in which the people of this country are so often misled. However, I am encouraged that the American people are clearly disclosing that they don't trust the major media, and don't believe what the media are saying. The other side of that coin is that, coming from the media myself, I pray that the major media may become more responsible, and stop this sorry business of "advocacy journalism." The people, given the facts accurately and objectively, are perfectly capable of making up their own minds.

At times I have been amused by the obsession of some of the media in their efforts to defeat me for reelection in 1984. Just before Christmas in 1982, for example, when I pleaded with the Senate to defer judgment on the so-called "five-cent gasoline tax" bill (a piece of legislation that scarcely any Senator had even read, and which involved a couple of hundred pages of very bad proposals), the media gleefully predicted that I had made Senators so angry that they would surely kill the tobacco program in 1983. It turned out, of course, that when the Senators got home and heard from their constituents, they came back to Washington in January 1983, apologized to me, and volunteered to help correct some of the bad features of the legislation. As for the tobacco program, the crucial vote in 1983 was the largest margin of victory we've had in the Senate in years for a program so vital to North Carolina and about 20 other states.

The same sort of thing occurred when I objected to the proposal for a national holiday honoring Martin Luther King. The media accused me of slandering Dr. King — when all I did, of course, was make a matter of record some of the facts that were acknowledged to be true and accurate by those who criticized me. I sense that these attacks may have revealed more about the media than about me. Certainly it is clear that their tactics are typical of their efforts over the past quarter century to reshape American society to a secular and materialist mold—and they have met with considerable success, I'm sad to say.

Again, I would emphasize that I am not really concerned about

their personal attacks on me, or their misrepresentations. I am saddened, however, to see such a constant onslaught aimed at President Reagan and against the fundamental principles which the President and I share.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Do you think the media properly reflect the real feeling of the people on the issues?

**HELMS:** I touched on that earlier, but let me elaborate a bit. I am convinced that much of the major media is totally out of step with the principles, priorities and standards of morality of the vast majority of Americans. If I am wrong in this perception—and if the American people do in fact think like the major media—then I fear for the survival of our country.

You may recall that in the autumn of 1981, *Public Opinion* magazine published a survey by Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman based on interviews with 240 journalists and broadcasters from major national news organizations, asking them about their religious outlook as well as their social and political views. Among this group 50 percent said they had no religious affiliation whatsoever. Only 8 percent go to church or synagogue weekly and 86 percent seldom or never attend religious services.

On the political side, 54 percent of the news media elite put themselves left of center, while only 19 percent identified themselves as conservative to any extent. In 1972, when 62 percent of the electorate chose Nixon, 81 percent of the news group voted for McGovern, and in 1976 the same percentage voted for Carter over Ford. Even more startling, 76 percent disagreed that homosexuality is wrong, and 90 percent favored abortion. A majority did not regard even adultery as wrong.

In early 1983 the same authors published another survey in *Public Opinion*—this time about the TV entertainment elite. They interviewed 104 of Hollywood's most influential television writers, producers, and executives. The results were similar to those in the news media elite survey. Of the entertainment elite 45 percent claimed no religious affiliation at all; 93 percent said that they seldom or never attend religious services.

In the 1972 presidential election, only 15 percent of the entertainment elite voted for Nixon while 82 percent chose McGovern. In 1976, 25 percent voted for Ford and 72 percent for Carter. In 1980, when President Reagan won by a landslide, the folks in Hollywood had different sentiments. The entertainment elite gave 49 percent of

its votes to Carter, 27 percent to John Anderson, and 20 percent to Reagan. Eighty percent of this entertainment group disagreed that homosexuality is wrong, and 97 percent favored abortion. A majority did not regard adultery as wrong.

I ask you, can any objective observer honestly believe either the entertainment industry or the news media honestly reflect the real feelings of the American people?

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Do you think Ronald Reagan has done a good job of advancing the best interests of the American people both at home and abroad?

**HELMS:** At the outset of my response to that, I must confess a bias in favor of Ron Reagan, the man. He and I have been friends for many years. I think I was the first U. S. Senator to offer a public endorsement of his candidacy for President. That was in 1973. I supported him in 1976, and again in 1980. I am convinced that he is instinctively one of the most decent and honorable men ever to occupy the Oval Office.

Having laid down that predicate, I would say that the first Reagan term has been an unqualified success in some fundamental areas. Under his leadership, federal income taxes have been substantially reduced and the decline in our defense capability has been checked. In addition, there are other areas where the President has done a superb job—reducing inflation for example, and cutting the prime interest rate in half.

But there have been disappointments as well. The Executive Branch has been filled with Washington “establishment types” rather than Reaganites. Where personnel is in fact policy, that hurts.

I was disappointed that the Reagan administration supported the \$27 billion gasoline tax hike. I regret that the President put Dr. Kissinger in charge of the Commission on Central America. I am sorry to see the Administration support the Kissinger Commission’s recommendation of an \$8.4 billion program for socialism in Central America.

I wish the Administration had not supported another \$8.4 billion for the IMF to bail out the big banks that have overextended themselves. I wish stronger diplomatic sanctions had been imposed against the Soviets after the Korean airline massacre. And so on.

But, like us all, the President is not perfect, and, what’s more, he has to contend daily with an endless barrage of carping and com-

plaining from left-wing politicians in Congress and the liberal news media. It's no easy job being a conservative president in such an atmosphere.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** What do you think Congress will do about restoring voluntary prayer in the public schools?

**HELMS:** By the time this interview is published the Senate will already have dealt with a Constitutional amendment on prayer. I hope that we will have the two-thirds necessary for passage.

In any event, I intend to offer my school prayer statutory language, requiring only a simple majority vote, later this year. My bill takes advantage of the power — and, I think duty — given Congress in Article III of the Constitution to limit federal court jurisdiction. Congress has the Constitutional power to withdraw jurisdiction over voluntary prayer from the Supreme Court and lower federal courts, thereby leaving the issue up to the states, where it was originally intended to be under the First Amendment anyway.

Senator Ervin told me, if I recall him correctly, that Congress has exercised this power at least 57 times. So the argument that my proposal is "court-stripping" — and therefore "unconstitutional" — is absurd. If Congress is supposed to sit back cowardly and let the federal courts run all over the rights and wishes of the people, why did the Founding Fathers bother to give Congress power over court jurisdiction in Article III?

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** What do you think this Congress will do about the right-to-life issue?

**HELMS:** The outlook on abortion is about the same as on prayer. The main difference is that we probably do not have a majority, even in the Senate, to go beyond simply prohibiting tax-funding of abortions. Still, we must never stop trying — and I just cannot, and will not, retreat on this issue. Any nation that condones the deliberate killing of one and one half million innocent, helpless human beings a year had better ponder its right to survive.

But assuming we will have Ron Reagan's leadership for a second term and with good Supreme Court appointments and more conservatives in Congress, we may be able to do something about this next year.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Is there any chance that Congress will trim

any part of the almost \$200 billion deficit the taxpayers will have to shoulder eventually?

HELMS: The current deficit is a nightmare, and Congress simply must find the will and the courage to get spending under control. That in turn is dependent on the American voters electing more responsible members of Congress.

Every now and then the devil makes me do something. One evening in May 1983, when the big spenders in the Senate spent hours denouncing the deficit, I decided not to make a speech like they were doing, but to propose a modest amendment to the budget resolution.

My amendment would have reduced federal spending across the board by 10 percent excepting Defense, Social Security, and interest payments on the national debt. It was no earth-shaking proposal, but it would have saved an estimated \$113 billion. My amendment stopped the speeches — temporarily — but it had no effect on the deficit because some of my colleagues, who are so good at pontificating, aren't so good at voting. The amendment was defeated 59 to 41.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Why won't Congress pass a Constitutional amendment to balance the budget?

HELMS: The Senate did pass such an amendment in 1982 and sent it to the House, where it failed to get the necessary two-thirds majority by something like 46 votes, as I recall.

So if the voters elect a few more fiscally responsible congressmen we might just get the balanced budget amendment through both houses of Congress.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Do you think the President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control (Grace Commission) will have any effect in making a dent in the costs of operating the federal government?

HELMS: I certainly hope so. The Senate Agriculture Committee, which I have the privilege of chairing, held hearings in February on the Grace Commission's recommendations in the agriculture area and heard from Peter Grace himself! What a great American! I am very hopeful that our committee will adopt these recommendations and report them to the full Senate for its approval.

Likewise, I hope all the committees of Congress will take a close look at the Grace recommendations and give serious consideration to

making many of them law. Needless to say, I am not optimistic about the prospects in the House, where good legislation often disappears as if it went into a black hole in outer space.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Do you think Ronald Reagan will be re-elected in November?

HELMS: Yes. No more gracious, kind and generous man has taken national leadership in our country this century. We have had other great men as presidents, but few have had the personal magnetism and the affection of the American people to the same degree as Ronald Reagan.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Will Jesse Helms be reelected in November?

HELMS: That's up to the Lord and people of North Carolina. Whatever they decide will suit Mrs. Helms and me. It has been an honor and privilege to serve for nearly 12 years in the venerable institution of the United States Senate.

I hope that I have stood for many of the things the people themselves would have stood for, had they been in the Senate. A lot of my positions have not been popular and here we have to go back to your question about the news media. I have been consistent, I think, in standing for cutting federal spending, with all of the waste and extravagance and abuse. I have tried to uphold respect for individual freedom. I have fought for a strong national defense, believing as I do that the surest way to avoid war is to be able to fight and win one. I believe in preservation of our great traditions bound up in church and family, and maintaining honor and dignity in public life.

To stand up and be counted for the people in North Carolina on these and other matters has made the sacrifices involved in political life all worthwhile. Should the voters reelect me this year, I shall be happy to serve them in the Senate, God willing, for six more years. If not, I want to go home knowing that I did the best I could, and that I never once compromised my principles. ☆

**BRIGID KERRIGAN**

**1991**

*Last year, while a senior at Harvard University, Brigid Kerrigan shook the Cambridge, Massachusetts campus by committing the ultimate politically incorrect crime: unfurling a Confederate Battle Flag from her dorm room window. But it was not only her defiance that stirred the liberals by the Bay. Brigid Kerrigan proved to be an erudite defender of her Southern heritage, calling her opponents "Brahmin Yankee Monoculturalists," and saying, "If they talk about diversity, then they are going to get it; if they talk about tolerance, then they'd better be ready to have it." Charles Goolsby visited with Brigid in her Great Falls, Virginia home.*

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** By way of background, Brigid, how long have you lived in the South?

**KERRIGAN:** Almost my entire life. I was born in Cook County, Illinois, but we moved to Virginia when I was just a few months old. I didn't have the good fortune to be born in the South, but fortunately we had the good sense to live here.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Did you grow up with an understanding of Southern history and culture?

**KERRIGAN:** I was rooted in it. My father taught history and, later on, ran a trade association of the chewing tobacco industry. We had busts of Robert E. Lee and Thomas Jefferson in our home. I learned to value the South's distinctive personality.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** You were educated in Virginia?

**KERRIGAN:** Virginia public schools through my first two years at the University of Virginia.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Then you transferred to Harvard?

**KERRIGAN:** Yes, I had written an honors thesis on the Antifederalists.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** What was your view of them?

KERRIGAN: Well, the thesis was entitled "Uncommon Sense," and, as you can imagine, it was a defense of Antifederalist political theory. I think it's clear that many of their prophecies came true.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Did you notice much difference between the University of Virginia and Harvard?

KERRIGAN: Quite a difference! At UVA we had an honors code. You could leave the class during an exam if you needed to. There were no monitors or security regulations. At my first exam at Harvard, I was told to leave my books and papers outside the classroom. The school provided the paper for the exam. We were spaced evenly throughout the room with a chair separating each student. Monitors had to accompany us if we went to the restrooms. You went from honor to suspicion.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Why did you decide to hang a rebel flag in the window of your room?

KERRIGAN: Just to remind me of home. That's all. It was George Washington's birthday and I wanted to remind myself of my Virginia heritage.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What happened next? . . .

KERRIGAN: I continued to display the flag. Then the student newspaper got into the act. Every morning for the next several weeks I was personally insulted, threatened, and ridiculed by these so-called "journalists." They even carried a cartoon of me being lynched by the student body while a crowd of spectators applauds and celebrates. Some joke, huh?

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Did any of the reporters or editors talk to you before publication?

KERRIGAN: Yes, in a manner of speaking. A reporter for the *Harvard Crimson*—his name was Ira Stoll—called me to tell me he had been checking on my "record" and wanted me to confirm that I had been involved in a traffic accident when I was 17.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What did that have to do with anything?

KERRIGAN: That's what I wanted to know. He said that since I was making an issue of my "ethnic background" (by displaying the flag) I could expect to have my "personal" background exposed unless I removed the flag.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What do you think he meant?

KERRIGAN: It was obviously a blackmail threat.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What happened next?

KERRIGAN: The *Crimson* ran a full-page article entitled "Who is Brigid Kerrigan?" The kind of thing you would find in the check-out line of the supermarket, only poorly written. Even the *Washington Post*, no friend of the flag, made fun of the article.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Did you protest the paper's editorial tactics?

KERRIGAN: Yes. I hand-delivered to the president of the *Crimson*, the reporters, and editors, copies of a letter that was written to me by a person misquoted as attacking me in one of the *Crimson* articles. The person they misquoted emphatically denied saying anything of the kind. I demanded that they print either a retraction or the letter itself.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How did the editors respond?

KERRIGAN: They ignored me and the person they misquoted.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How did this kind of "reporting" affect you personally?

KERRIGAN: I was harassed constantly. Teachers made fun of me to my classmates. Many of my friends told me they couldn't be seen in public with me. The administrators of my residence hall released an open letter to the other residents condemning my display of the flag and sympathizing with all who opposed me. They declared that I was "not a member of the Kirkland Residence Hall community." Black students chanted "we shall overcome" outside my window—a ridiculous trivialization, in my opinion, of what Dr. King and the civil rights leaders were trying to do when they chanted that song in earlier decades. The president of Harvard University, President Bok,

congratulated himself in an open letter for having upheld freedom of speech by tolerating someone like me at Harvard. I was "insensitive and unwise."

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Did he know you personally?

KERRIGAN: We never met or spoke.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Aside from declaring you an enemy of mankind, did the administration or anyone else invite you to seriously discuss the merits of the flag?

KERRIGAN: There was the junior/parents weekend forum and a Kennedy School debate at which I represented myself and addressed some of the absurd charges that were being made. By that time, another student had hung out a homemade Nazi flag in order to link, she said, the Confederate flag with Nazi genocide and racism. She later removed it because it upset the Jewish students.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What was the rationale for linking the Confederate flag to the Swastika?

KERRIGAN: None was really given but it gave me an opportunity to point out that Memorial Church in Harvard Yard has a memorial plaque with the names of all Harvard men who died in wars—including those German students who died fighting for Central powers in World War One and the Axis powers in World War Two. The only Harvard war alumni that are deliberately not represented among the honored dead are the Harvard men who fought for the Confederate States of America. So Harvard not only dishonors Confederate veterans, it—not I—honors the Nazi dead. As for anti-Semitism, I also pointed out that the man for whom "Lowell House" (one of the campus residence halls) is named—A. Lawrence Lowell—was a fanatical anti-Semite who considered it a major goal of his administration as President of Harvard to bar the admission of as many Jews as possible. If Harvard was really as sensitive to racism as it claims to be, they would dismantle Lowell House brick by brick.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How did the students respond to this information?

KERRIGAN: They didn't want to discuss it. No one wanted to

address real issues. Every time I went to address factual gaps and historical misunderstandings, I found it was only a show—an opportunity given to student activist groups to take me to the woodshed and tell me how to think. My critics were invariably people who never tried to talk to me, didn't know me, didn't know what they were talking about, and probably couldn't find Vicksburg on a map.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** Did you get any support from the students or the public?

**KERRIGAN:** One other Harvard student, Tim McCormick, also displayed a rebel flag in a show of solidarity. A lot of students told me they sympathized but they were pretty well intimidated. I got some support from the ACLU for my right to display the flag. The public response was wonderful. I got about one hundred letters. Not just from the South, but from all over America. None was hostile and the overwhelming majority were sympathetic and encouraging. I particularly liked one from ten-year-old Bonnie Carter of Norfolk, Virginia. She was proud of "her" flag because it stood for "heritage not hate." People like her made it all worthwhile.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** How was the matter resolved?

**KERRIGAN:** It wasn't resolved. I never took the flag down. Only after they handed me my diploma and I packed my bags did the flag come down.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** What conclusion do you draw from your experience at Harvard?

**KERRIGAN:** Harvard needs to lighten up. They should take their bourgeois guilt and their racial complexes to their analysts. The real bigots are the intellectuals—the overeducated, Ivy-league left who tolerate only the ideas that serve their agenda. That's not learning, that's indoctrination. ☆

ANDREW NELSON LYTLE

1991

*Born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (1902), Mr. Lytle is the only living contributor to *I'll Take My Stand*, the great manifesto of agrarian values. His essay, "The Hind Tit," contains a spiritual affirmation of life lived close to the land. And it also contains warnings about the soul-devouring leviathan of our age — warnings that are as eloquent and even more depressing today than when the volume first appeared in 1930.*

*Mr. Lytle's 1931 biography of the Confederacy's most dangerous general (Bedford Forrest and His Critter Company) and later (1966) his collection of historical essays, The Hero with the Private Parts, remain two of the best books ever published on the War Between the States, its true causes and cultural legacy.*

*Although his contribution as philosopher/historian is formidable, Mr. Lytle describes himself mainly as a "reader and writer of fiction" and indeed his works of fiction rank among the best produced in this century. Andrew Lytle's novels include The Long Night (1936), At the Moon's Inn (1941), A Name for Evil (1947), and probably his best-known novel, The Velvet Horn (1957), and two collections of social and political essays, Southerners and Europeans (1988) and From Eden to Babylon (1990). All are essential reading for Southerners and other students of permanent things.*

*Mr. Lytle, who still farms, was interviewed in his home, The Log Cabin, in Monteagle, Tennessee, by Southern Partisan contributor Brett Moffatt. We are treated to the humor and wisdom of this most important Southerner.*

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** You warned in your essay "The Hind Tit" that the South was in danger of becoming industrialized and losing its way of life. Has that happened since you wrote the essay?

LYTLE: Yes. Look around you. That's all you've got to do. There are very few real farms left. Farming as a community is gone because they have destroyed the family. *The Episcopal Prayer Book*, the new one, does the same thing. The divinity has been taken out of the Church, leaving only the husks, which are merely manners and mores. That's what's happening.

When we wrote *I'll Take My Stand*, about half the population in the South owned land (and we are not just limiting it to the South). They could not believe that the life they had inherited and that they

were living could disappear. But it has.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: So what happens to us now?

LYTLE: Well, I'm not a prophet. I don't know. But I have my opinion on it.

The land is there, but industrialists haven't the remotest idea what it is. Donald Davidson mentions a man down in Muscle Shoals. The land was so poor, he couldn't even get an insurance company mortgage on it. The fire in his fireplace hadn't gone out in 100 years. So when he sold the place, he put it in the contract that he be allowed to pick the chimney up with the fire in it.

And so, they did! They carried it to where he bought another place, and set it up. But don't you see, the fire was the spirit of that house. It had not gone out in 100 years, and that's what the buyer couldn't understand.

I used to be a farmer, you know. We're a farming family. I ran a farm called Cornsilk in Guntersville, Alabama. I saw the doom of the land. It was just about the time of *I'll Take My Stand* that the TVA covered the land in water.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Tell us about the farming life ...

LYTLE: Well, I bought a "threwed away" farm up here and I grew some tobacco and some corn. There's no bread better than Hickory King corn, so I planted five or six acres of that, and I planted my wheat. There was a mill about five miles away. And I killed three hogs every year for my meat.

I had a cow that was the greatest milk cow in the country. Guernsey. My father would walk with her, and golly, she would shake her head. We paid \$200 for that cow, and she was the queen of my herd.

Then a disease hit. I was in Florida at the time, at the University at Gainesville. I taught a creative writing course. And by the way, there's no such thing as man creating. I didn't know that then. But anyway, I came back home and the herd was in bad shape. And when the old cow led the cows in, she saw me and ran to the fence and hollered at me. And the turkeys—grew 600 turkeys—they hollered at me. And that was the real world. That's part of farming. You are a common creature with other creatures. They wait on you, but you wait on them too. You feed them and look after them.

I remember one turkey in particular. I once bought 100 medium-

sized turkeys, and I had to put a roosting pole in there. If you leave the birds on the floor, the breast will sort of dip down and you'll lose some price on them. So I put up a roosting pole and I fed them all the corn they'd eat and then I gave them peanuts. And ooh! They'd just run for peanuts. You see turkey meat is dry, and peanuts will sweeten it. So, I got two cents more a pound.

Anyway, I put this little roosting pole in there. And every time I put them up on it, they'd jump down. Put 'em up, and they'd jump down. I was a novice, so I decided to show them how. I got up there and roosted. And I'll tell you it was uncomfortable, squatting up there on that little pole.

Then Rosie Bell hopped up beside me and that started a great love affair. After she hopped up there, the others would hop up, and they all settled up there roosting. But Rosie Bell would follow me. She followed me and slept at the foot of my bed. I had to put newspapers down. I put the *Nashville Banner* on the floor and the *Tennessean* on the foot of my bed, so as not to show any favoritism, don't you see.

Whenever I left, Rosie Bell would holler 'til I got back. It was a real love affair. She once went to Nashville with me. They had never seen a turkey in a department store, and Rosie Bell had never seen an elevator. But it didn't mean anything to her. She walked right on. We had a fine time.

That fall I went to Southwestern and sent her back to Cornsilk. They said she choked to death on a biscuit. But I think they ate that bird. It was just wicked. It's a cannibal world, you know. We all eat one another, in one way or the other.

But that was the life that I lived. And it was a good life.

Everybody was alive. Some families were better off than others, for certain reasons. You knew who was a good farmer and who wasn't. Whatever his condition, everybody had a place.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You have written about the universality of communication, the speed of communication. Does this make us a tighter community?

LYTLE: With brief, quick movement, you'll never make a community—you're just passing through. How are you going to make a community when all the people speak a different language? You've got to learn a language to talk to people. And what are you going to do about the inherited ways of doing things? Speed destroys communication.

For instance, my grandmother owned the turnpike between Murfreesboro and Woodbury, and there was a gate every five miles. I used to go with my father to collect tolls.

People didn't move around unless they had business, because they had to pay to get out from where they were. Every road out of Murfreesboro had a tollgate, had a toll road, and so the community was not free to just get a notion and go somewhere. They lived there within a five-mile community.

The automobile was the instrument of breaking the community down, not the railroad as some have said. In cases of railroads, you still hitched up a horse, you curried him, fed him, you hitched the buggy and went to the depot, and got on a train. Then you went somewhere else with a horse and buggy again. That didn't destroy anything. The destruction came when you just got in a car and went anywhere, just get on the big road—and go.

I rode a horse from here to Murfreesboro through the mountains with snow on the ground. I walked him down. I was afraid he'd fall and break a leg. He was a gelding named Frank, a flea-bitten gray horse. But as I went along, I would see an object in front of me and I would gradually approach it, and take in all the things around me on the way. You don't see anything going 90 miles an hour. So, it's a definite possibility that technology will not bring us closer, but drive us farther apart. Communication is not communion, only a community can give you communion.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What about the medium of television? We hear what's happening in Eastern Europe about as quickly as we hear what's happening in Chattanooga.

LYTLE: You don't hear it, you hear a *report* of it. Television is a magical instrument, you see. It's not the truth. It's magical because you think there are people there, but they're not really there. There are figures that move around but the report is always inadequate. What are you going to do? What can you do? This is a dangerous instrument because it stops people from visiting and talking together.

I'm saying that farming the world over has always been the common way of making communication. Then the town was the place where they exchanged their produce, where they carried on their business. That was real communication.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: The New Deal period was an interesting one for Southern agriculture. What is your opinion of the Roosevelt

New Deal programs?

LYTLE: The government was putting its hands on what is not its business. That is one aspect of it. One of the worst things that the government did, during that Depression, was to say, just because it didn't fit the stock market, that you must plow under, forcing your crops. Whether forcing your hogs, or forcing your calves, or forcing your cotton—this was the most wicked thing that I ever heard. Asking a man to pile up half or to destroy his work. It's wicked.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You have said that John Taylor of Caroline had a proper view of the government's role—

LYTLE: He called it the Paper and Patronage Aristocracy. The paper was the banks and the central government. Patronage was the politics. His sense of agronomy was running the government long after his death. He was a great man. A great man who was not listened to in his time. He and old John Randolph of Roanoke. Randolph was better than Jefferson.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: I was interested in your comment that man does not create...

LYTLE: From a religious point of view, everything has been made. God made it all. Man can't create. He can't make things. He imitates what's there, by his vision. He sees something that nobody else sees, and by his craft he can make others see it—and they call that a creative act. That's what they mean when they say "it's a creative act." I misused the word for fifty years.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Then creative writing is —

LYTLE: An imitation. This is a religious view. It's not a scientific view. The scientific view is always incomplete because there is no such thing as science. There are sciences. Each has its own method. Sciences hold the view that man is god. Now, they never say that. They don't dare make the rash statement. The best of the scientists know that they are dealing with mystery. You've got to believe in something outside yourself, because you know you're not capable of handling everything. Sickness for example.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: We talk a lot about the struggle to get the

truth out about our Confederate heritage...

LYTLE: You must read Frank Owsley. He was a great Southerner—one of the Agrarians. He was a great Southern historian and the liberals can't stand him. They are trying to discount his work. But he based his work on things like the census records, the census man who went down the road — this farm, that farm, that farm, and from those records Owsley captured the truth about the South. The Yankee idea was that there was nothing but masters and slaves and poor whites. Frank completely discounts that in *Plain Folk of the Old South*. Three-fourths of the people who fought the war didn't own slaves.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: A friend of mine in East Tennessee who checked the records, says East Tennessee was no more than half Unionist. They always tell us it was at least seventy percent Unionist. He says you can't prove that by the records.

LYTLE: No, you can't do it. But of course, Tennessee generally didn't want to secede. My grandfather, who was a rich man, said we could get rid of abolitionists without secession. Nevertheless, all of his sons fought. He died after the battle of Murfreesboro.

But that's the point. So much false information has been put out. Lincoln made that war. He did. He rejected the Crittenden Compromise, which said that to keep from having war let's extend the Mason-Dixon line to the Pacific coast. Lincoln rejected that and we went to war.

And now we all live under slavery.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Why do you suppose there is so much interest in a war that was fought one hundred thirty years ago?

LYTLE: Because it had meaning. It was the destruction of our society. England knew if the South didn't win they were done for. But they thought the South would win.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Is that why they didn't intervene?

LYTLE: Yes. Also, they were getting rich on selling to both sides for two years.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What were some of the contributors to the

Confederate defeat?

LYTLE: Owsley shows in *State Rights and the Confederacy*, that the very idea of states' rights had as much to do with the defeat of the Confederacy as anything else. For example, the Confederacy turned down 100,000 men because they didn't have any guns to fight with. They could have given them broomsticks and trained them. Then they lost troops to the state organizations who kept them to protect the states. Each state couldn't fight the war itself. Also, the very idea of states' rights held Davis to a policy of not to invade. For instance, after winning the battle of First Manassas, they should have gone into Washington. But Davis wanted to stand there like a virgin who was about to be raped.

States do not have rights. They have power. Citizens have rights. That's the whole thing about it. If your state is a state, it has its sovereign power. The Yankees who got control gave themselves the right to invade a state. The North should not have accepted that—but they did.

And the same thing happened in the revolution in England, with the Divine Right of Kings. It's the old puritanical way of seizing power by subterfuge. Kings didn't have any divine powers or rights, the King was the secular overseer of God, just as the Bishop was the religious overseer of God. But that didn't mean inherently they had rights. They had representatives.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Still, the Southern spirit has survived, hasn't it?

LYTLE: During Reconstruction they never were able to triumph over our spirit. Remember the so-called "Monkey Trial" in Dayton? In that trial, they were trying to impose on us a secular religion: science.

Mencken described the South at that time as "The Sahara of the Bozart." I say that's like a thief breaking into your house where he's already stolen all the silver and accusing you of not having any.

Even today, the Southern spirit is not all gone. But it is pretty much. I've heard people say, "Look how right we are now. It was a good thing to lose the War." It's not a good thing to lose anything like that.

You see, we have been taught by the Yankee sense of schooling: that we had these slaves that we beat and abused. And because of that, the War was inevitable. This is the message of Yankee instruc-

tion. Frank Owsley shows it's not so.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** What would we need to do to put people back on the land?

**LYTLE:** That would take a minimum of machinery and minimum of money exchange. All farming used to be that. You set aside a certain portion of your land to grow hay and corn and oats and things to feed your work stock. There was no money to go out and put gas and oil in tractors and other machinery to break down.

In farming, you're dealing with imponderables. I stole what a man said. He said "Farming is a man forever making his last stand!" But it is wonderful. You're dealing with the divine. That's why the really good farmers are always a part of a religious society. That's why the Russians can't grow anything.

You've got to feel an identity with land, an identity with nature.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** That's hard with central government like ours isn't it, where money exchange is so important.

**LYTLE:** Yes, that has changed the whole economy. Under industrialism, the whole West makes the same things. They've got nothing to sell each other. Before you can need the products of industry, you first need bread and meat, and you make bread and meat because you deal with nature and the divine.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** You said once that we are in the "advanced stages of Reconstruction." What did you mean by that?

**LYTLE:** I mean just that. What was Reconstruction? They're trying to dig up Forrest's body, trying to rewrite history. You can't dare show the Confederate flag. They're trying to take it out of the state flags. These are the obvious things.

But we also see it in the literature and the school system. Look at the schools. We had church schools. But now the school system is made by the Yankees. And they teach not only the Yankee view of Southern history, they also teach the religion of science. It's terrible to know that the other side of the moon is just like the side you see. Now no poet can talk about the mystery of the moon. They've destroyed that too. ☆

JAMES J. MEREDITH

1990

*James J. Meredith was born on his parents' 84-acre farm near Kosciusko, Mississippi in 1933. He graduated from high school in St. Petersburg, Florida, then joined the United States Air Force. After leaving the Air Force, he graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1963, and received a law degree from Columbia University in 1968.*

*Meredith has run for political office, served as a consultant and lecturer in universities across the country, has been a Wall Street stock broker, and was a visiting professor at the University of Cincinnati. He is the author of Three Years in Mississippi (1965).*

*In 1989, Meredith accepted a position as Special Assistant on the staff of U.S. Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) He and his wife, the former Mary Jane Wiggins, have five children.*

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How early did you become active in the Civil Rights movement?

MEREDITH: The term "civil rights" is an insult to me. I was engaged in a war to acquire citizenship for me and my kind. That's what made my case different. Not only was I *not* a part of the civil rights movement, I wouldn't let it become a part of me.

The white liberals were the ones who concocted the scheme of the so-called civil rights movement, and their principal objective was to establish the black as a second class of citizenship. That's something that had never been attempted before.

The liberals' scheme to keep themselves in power won't work, unless blacks are considered second-class citizens. That perpetual second-class citizenship is accomplished through the civil rights movement.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Doesn't the civil rights movement claim to help blacks?

MEREDITH: But you see, inherent in the whole concept of the civil rights movement is the acceptance of the position of social inferiority on the part of the group being helped. It's inherent. The real objective of the liberal elite is to elevate themselves by placing a portion of the citizenry under them. They set out to make the black the bottom level of American society, so that the liberals could then appear to be

ministering to the needs of blacks and the blacks would feel dependent on their assistance.

The only way they'll reduce me to this type of subservience is over my dead body. Once blacks realize what the white liberals and the black elite have done to them, they'll lynch them in the street! Most blacks simply don't know what they have done.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** So you say the white liberals and the black elite have cut a deal to gain votes?

**MEREDITH:** That's right.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** A theme in the news media is that you have changed—that the James Meredith who forced his way into the University of Mississippi would never have gone to work for Jesse Helms. Are you the same person?

**MEREDITH:** Of course. They know I'm the same person. The liberals have been fighting me for 27 years. What they did through the media was to keep the population thinking I was one of them.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** So the James Meredith "Marching Against Fear," which was widely publicized, was not like a Martin Luther King march?

**MEREDITH:** Absolutely not. It became that after I was shot. The march carried my name, but I was never a part of "Meredith's March." I have never demonstrated against anything. There's no one in America big enough for me to demonstrate against. It's a total insult to me. I'll fight you, but I won't protest you. The only real mistake that I made was that I didn't think they could do much harm, but that was an error, a miscalculation on my part, and I have to carry the responsibility for that.

**SOUTHERN PARTISAN:** What do you think of Martin Luther King?

**MEREDITH:** I saw Martin Luther King maybe three times in his lifetime when I was close enough to him for a conversation. Each time I asked if he was really serious about his non-violence business; and he never told me that he was. I frankly don't think he was. It was strictly a tactic, a strategy. Actually Dr. King was the only one of the so-called civil rights leaders that I ever really knew, or really partici-

pated with at all. There's no question in my mind but that his philosophy was damaging to the black race. No citizen should ever give up his rights. To give up your rights is un-American.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How did King promote giving up rights?

MEREDITH: The whole theory of non-violence, leaving it to the other man. Good is no good unless it has the power to deter bad.

You see, I'm a military man. I grew up in the military, I spent the first nine years of my adult life in the military. I pledged my life and was ready to give it, to preserve my citizenship. I was not and I am not about to give up those rights. Acceding to a non-violence philosophy is giving up your manhood.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Do you think the South is more "racist" than any other region?

MEREDITH: Well, for 27 years the liberals have been using the term "racist." I have asked them what it means, and I have never had one to define what they mean by racism or racist. It is simply a public relations cover under which they can take a position that they don't have to explain.

I was on Wall Street for a number of years. They say there that "he who sells that isn't his'n, must buy it back or go to prison." These so-called black leaders have sold the interest of the black race in the school desegregation thing, and in every case they sold the future interest of black people.

I know blacks who sold out for judgeships. There's not a major city in this country where I can't pull up the record and show where and what these people did. It's public record.

For example, right now, you don't have any blacks coming into the education field. This is because of a concoction two decades ago by blacks who everybody put on a pedestal.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How did that come about?

MEREDITH: Well, for instance the Jackson, Mississippi school desegregation agreement called for 40 percent of the teachers in the new arrangement to be black and 60 percent to be white. But they never called for another black to be hired. Now the 40 percent who got the jobs are on their way out. But there are no blacks to replace them. I know judges who are judges because they concurred with that

agreement.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: A one-time-only thing?

MEREDITH: Exactly. They sold the interest of the future of the whole black race. They had a right to sell their interests, but they didn't have a right to sell the interests of the whole race.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What differences do you see between the North and the South?

MEREDITH: Actually, there have been differences. But now there are very few differences of consequence, because an overwhelming number of blacks live in urban areas. There is virtually no difference between a big city in New Jersey and a big city in South Carolina. A ghetto in Jackson, Mississippi is the same as a ghetto in Washington, D.C. A ghetto in Tallahassee, Florida is no different than a ghetto in Oakland, California. For day to day purposes for blacks there really is no difference between the North and the South.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: I understand a group of liberal whites and blacks succeeded in getting eleven of your speaking engagements canceled at colleges and military bases recently...

MEREDITH: All over the country. But they have been much more effective this year. They succeeded in a 100% boycott. And they used federal funds to do it, which is against the law. There are very few colleges where I couldn't successfully prosecute the black hierarchy for conspiracy in using government funds improperly, violating the First Amendment rights of people who disagree with them.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: How about the issue of abortion? Do you think most black Americans are pro-life or pro-abortion?

MEREDITH: I don't know any black Americans who are pro-abortion, I know that 98 percent of black families are against abortion. I don't know any who are for it. But that does not come into the decision making process because they are not involved in pro-life as a movement.

They vote for people who believe in abortion because it doesn't come into the decision making process when they are deciding how they are going to vote.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Even though they are personally against abortion?

MEREDITH: Right.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What do you think about Jesse Jackson?

MEREDITH: Well, last I heard he was a Democrat. That's all I need to know. I'm a Republican.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: What are your thoughts on the black family? Is it in decline?

MEREDITH: The destruction of the black family was a primary goal of the liberal elite and their black elite cohorts, because the black extended family system is a total system of government. It controls every aspect of the black individual's life. So, if someone else is going to control that, like social agencies or teacher unions, they have to first undermine the influence of the black family. It is a real struggle.

The greatest attraction of Senator Helms to me is the fact that, for seventeen years, he's the only major political figure in this nation who has consistently supported traditional values and moral standards. That is what has to happen.

In terms of the black race, my advisors tell me (and my own research concurs with this) that the black race is as strong as it has ever been and the black family is as strong as it has ever been. Most of the people they are calling the black underclass, where they say the family unit has broken down, are actually people who have been expelled from the black extended family because they did not comply with the rules and regulations that were required. I would say that 85 percent of black Americans are absolutely solid. They are the unknown element.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: All the blacks I know are church-going people who believe in family values, and a strong national defense. But Jesse Jackson runs round talking of cutting the defense budget and of his being pro-choice. The two just don't seem to match ...

MEREDITH: Well, that's because you just don't understand the ultimate scheme of white liberals. They are bad people.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: Have you been back to Mississippi much?

MEREDITH: No, my family is in California. So whenever I leave here, I go to California. But my strongest base is still in Mississippi.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: I just wondered if you miss the place?

MEREDITH: Well, I don't have that kind of attachment. I'm on a mission. That's really all I think about. I'm not very emotional.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: In other words you don't lie awake hating Ross Barnett (who kept you out of Ole Miss in 1962)?

MEREDITH: Absolutely not. I wasn't emotionally involved. I was at war. If you don't understand that, you can't really understand me. From my perspective, my enemy would have been a fool not to try to kill me. So I got shot. But the guy who shot me was irrelevant to me. I didn't even try to find out who he was. All that was relevant was that he didn't kill me.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: You don't seem to have any ill-will toward the people of Mississippi ...

MEREDITH: Well, as far as I'm concerned, they would have been crazy not to fight against me, because I went there to fight them. I went there to take their good thing away from them. I also understand the liberals and the black elite and why they are fighting me today.

SOUTHERN PARTISAN: When did the black elite form? Was it there in 1962?

MEREDITH: In 1962 there was a base. Actually the white liberals started the whole thing, and they reached out and brought in the black elite.

Where no black elite existed, they established it. Supposedly the biggest organization is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I don't know any blacks in the world today who describe themselves as colored people. The NAACP has never been about blacks, it's been about the white liberals and the black elite. That's all it's ever been about.

But we cannot let the interests of a small number of people overshadow the interest of the nation. ☆

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